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RAINBOW'S  
END:  
ALASKA

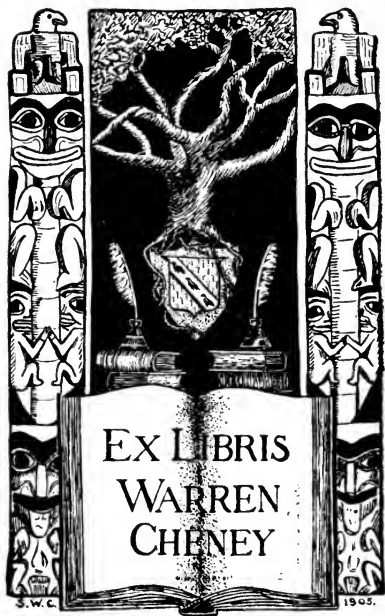


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by  
ALICE PALMER  
ANDERSON

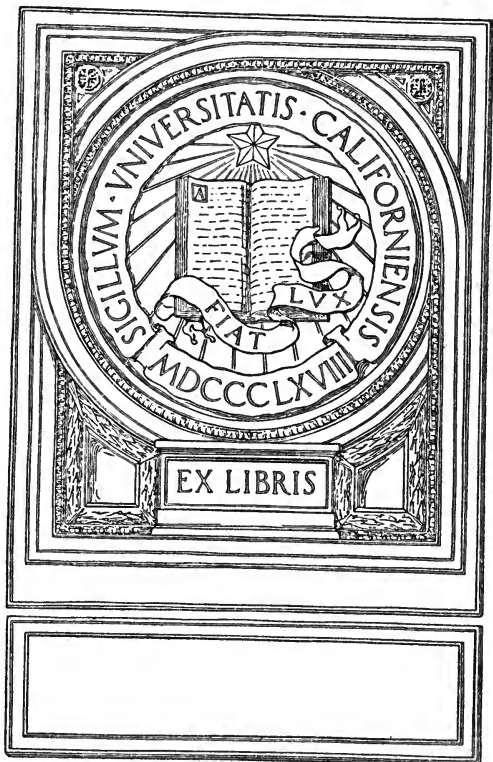
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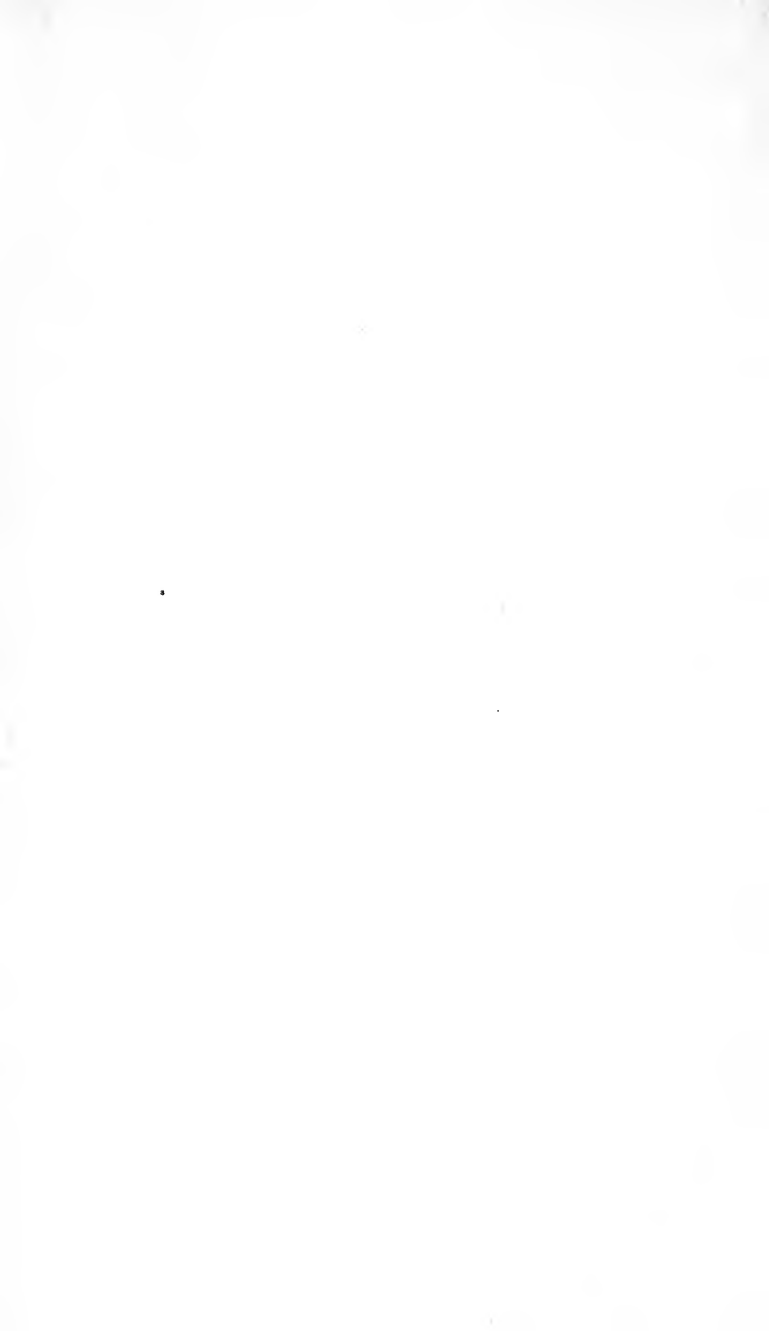


















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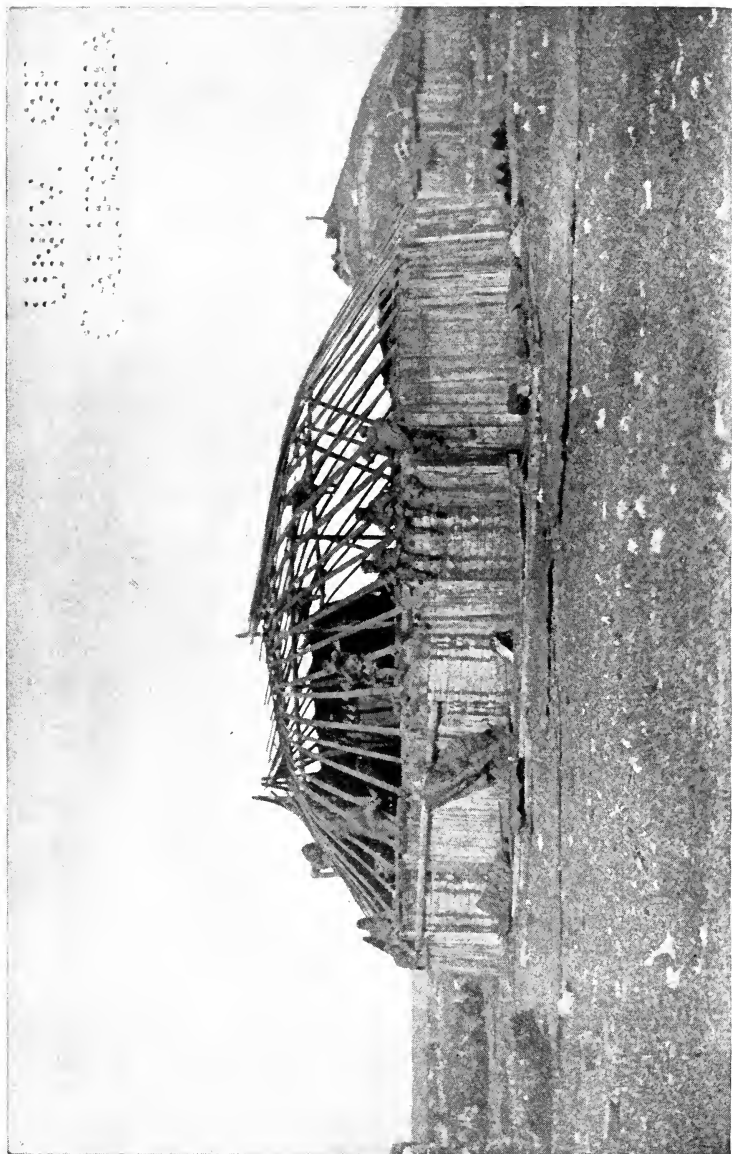












NATIVE HOMES — ST. LAWRENCE ISLAND, BERING SEA



# The Rainbow's End:

Alaska

BY

Alice Palmer Henderson

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HERBERT S. STONE & COMPANY  
CHICAGO & NEW YORK  
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1898



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MRS. May L. Chevey  
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MAIN

To  
Mr. Portus B. Weare

WHOSE FAITH AND WORKS—FAITH IN OUR GREAT NORTH-  
WEST POSSESSION, WORKS IN OPENING TO THE WORLD ITS  
HITHERTO DOUBLE-LOCKED TREASURY—HAVE SPANNED  
BOTH DISTANCE AND DIFFICULTIES IN THE HOPE THAT HE  
MAY FIND SOME NUGGETS OF WORTH IN THIS POT OF GOLD  
FOUND BY ONE SEEKER AT

The Rainbow's End,

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED BY

The Author

*Chicago, May 1, 1898.*

M49160



## Contents

Chapter		Page
I.	TOWARD THE NORTH LAND . . . . .	1
II.	DUTCH HARBOR AND UNALASKA . . . . .	8
III.	BERING SEA AND ST. MICHAEL . . . . .	27
IV.	THE LITTLE ESKIMO TOWN OF STEBBINS . . . . .	46
V.	THE POTLATCH . . . . .	66
VI.	KUTLIK, HUNTING AND FISHING . . . . .	80
VII.	ANDREAFSKI AND IKOGMUTE . . . . .	95
VIII.	HOLY CROSS MISSION AND INDIAN MYTHS . . . . .	114
IX.	ANVIK AND INDIAN DEATH CUSTOMS . . . . .	130
X.	NULATO, 648 MILES FROM ST. MICHAEL . . . . .	144
XI.	THE TANANA, MINOOK, AND THE RAPIDS . . . . .	160
XII.	COAL, QUARTZ, AND OTHER MINERALS OF ALASKA . . . . .	173
XIII.	ALASKA DOGS . . . . .	185
XIV.	REINDEER . . . . .	195
XV.	SHELDON JACKSON'S MONUMENT . . . . .	211
XVI.	RESOURCES FOR PERMANENT SETTLEMENT IN ALASKA . . . . .	225
XVII.	WHAT SHALL I PUT INTO MY PACK? . . . . .	237
XVIII.	A MINE IS MINE! . . . . .	251
XIX.	FT. YUKON—THE FLATS—CIRCLE CITY . . . . .	263
XX.	BEYOND THE BOUNDARY LINE . . . . .	275
XXI.	THE END OF THE RAINBOW, AND SUNDRY POTS OF GOLD . . . . .	283





# The Rainbow's End: Alaska

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## CHAPTER I

### TOWARD THE NORTH LAND

So the little hand, soft and white as a crumpled rose-leaf, snuggled into the larger palm, and the tiny fingers, with implicit child trust, confided themselves to the others' leading, were it to the ends of the earth. And they two left the turmoil, the un-ease, the grime of Chicago behind them, shaking the dust of that city from their happy wandering feet. The tired brown eyes and the merry blue ones looked gladly into one another. The pilgrims laughed softly to themselves when the wheels began to turn and they realized they were actually started for the end of the rainbow.

Hats were placed upon the broad shelf over the door, wraps hung upon numerous brass hooks. The little body screwed herself into a corner of the "make-believe house" and gazed out upon the "slippery country," while the other looked musingly about the compartment. Time was, and not so long ago, when a contortionist was the only person who could come out whole from a night's railway travel. People having spines, and those whose joints worked but one way, suffered through the long night watches in wretchedness which distinctly lowered their moral tone. Yet here was a dainty apartment, retired as one's own



bedroom, and beautiful as a queen's boudoir, finished in plain mahogany, every broad panel selected for its individual beauty and inlaid; velvet carpet upon the floor, rich silken brocade upon the walls, the electric lights of the chandelier multiplying themselves in the plate pier glass which covered the door, lights over one's shoulder for reading, shaded so as to throw the light upon the page and spare the eyes—if you were indeed a queen your private car would be no more luxurious than this same Chicago and Northwestern road's limited train, surely the finest in the world.

"It's every sort of a room, isn't it?" exclaimed the small traveler, looking at the beautiful washstand in the corner with its hot and cold water, shelves, towel racks, caraffe of drinking water, closet for shoes, etc. One can put everything away in this compact little drawing-room, sleeping apartment, bath, boudoir, all in one. Out went the lights! The child crept between the linen sheets in her make-believe house, lay smilingly listening to the incessant grumbling of the sleeping car that was not allowed to sleep and in her journey journeyed into Slumberland. The brown eyes could not close so soon, so the other went into the library car for a book. Here again how would our fathers have wondered at a room furnished with green leather "sleepy hollows," two fully equipped desks inviting one to wind up a business correspondence or to drop a love letter *en route*, files of illustrated papers tempting an idle hour, and books peeking out from the plate glass doors. Here gentlemen were smoking and reading and talking as if in their clubs at home, while the train rushed on with scarcely a vibration over the perfect roadbed. Yet not so long ago one's frame was all but rent asunder as the train jolted and jerked and thundered along. Now it is a moving hotel, with a luxuri-



ous dining-room—shades of basket luncheons of the past! Oh, “the world do move”!

They wakened early, for the sun seems to think that the minute he is up everybody else ought to be, and fusses about the room until there is no use trying to sleep. They breakfasted with the beautiful Twin Cities, who are enriched by their father Mississippi’s extensive business and heirs to the gold of their lovely mother *née* Wheatland.

And it was the second day: They sped across the prairies, the level threshing floors of the world’s granary, swept clean of wheat now, with pools of water showing that Dame Nature had barely finished her Spring house-cleaning. Flowers peered out everywhere as they passed; the year was too young for hard work.

The third day they passed through Bismarck, North Dakota, a town which has always had enough cranks to turn every freak machine extant. They crossed the muddy Missouri at the little town of Mandan, named from the curious blue-eyed Indians who once lived about it, a powerful tribe. At Medora they caught sight of the Marquis de Mores’ castle, high perched upon a crag, and of the great packing houses builded with his American wife’s “rocks.” The little town was named after her. At the mansion extravagant hospitality was once dispensed. House parties feasted, danced, hunted, marveling at the surrounding wilderness and the luxury that had invaded it. But the marquis has ended his adventurous life in far away Africa, the great buildings are abandoned, like the foolish scheme that demanded them, and serve only to bring to mind a man whose fine riding and personal bravery were his most conspicuous virtues.

Late in the afternoon they reached the Bad Lands,



for they traveled, land and sea, by the Northern Pacific. If the Lands *have* been Bad, they look as if they had suffered enough to atone. Scarred, seamed, desolate, their tortured buttes stand, seamed as by fire. When the sun shines down to comfort them, many beautiful colors show in their rugged rocks. Stern fortresses, airy castles, piercing spires, pinnacles and domes rise everywhere. Under the moonlight they lie ghastly and mysterious and defiant. One butte close to the railroad is shaped like a huge dome with curious beehives standing in circles around it upon narrow platforms. There is an infinite variety to the fantastic forms. Some forts still smoke, as if the enemy had but just retired. All the region resembles the battleground of fiends. What a mighty fire was this, when the very earth bubbled up in tortured heat. The Bad Lands are, to me, one of the most fascinating places in the world. I should love to spend many days in their pathless fastnesses.

Next the Rockies. The Northern Pacific gathers the mountains together and threads the emerald valleys upon its steel wires. I never pass through this magnificent scenery unmoved, among

[The hills, rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun,  
The vales stretching in pensive quietness between.

Fair Helena and Missoula of Montana, and Spokane, dabbling her feet in the rapid river; the mountain rills, cascades, Lake Pend d'Oreille, so many beauties. Eyes both brown and blue tired with eager sight.

The fourth day: Myriads of flowers, lovely fruit farms, great trees, seemingly rooted for aye to the rich black soil, yet masts to be to ships as yet unbuilt, which will proudly sail to countless ports. At last Tacoma, sitting in beauty upon her hills, glancing a complacent eye to the busy docks below, only to note their ever-



increasing foreign and domestic commerce, then looking dreamily down the blue waters of Puget Sound, far out upon the broad Pacific, or backward to Mount Tacoma, rising majestically to heaven. I always love that mountain best at the particular time I am viewing it, whether it be when the morning sun wakens it by waving rosy pennants over its snowy breast; the mid-day shines in golden splendor over it; when, in late afternoon, the mountain burns with changing fires, like a priceless opal worn by Mother Earth upon her bosom; or, set about by stars, Luna fastens her sable garments with the exquisite great moonstone. In Tacoma is an artist named Bradley. "The mountain has hypnotized me," she complained. "I cannot break away from its charm. I take a fresh canvas and mix my paints for something new. Then I glance out upon its serene beauty and the picture I had meant to paint becomes indistinct, and I find myself painting Mount Tacoma again. I am becoming a mono-artist, if not a monomaniac on the subject;" and Mrs. Bradley gave an impatient dab at her offending mountain.

Further up the bay is Seattle, aggressive, progressive; not beautiful, but busy.

Then again the little hand stole into the elder's and the pilgrims went aboardship, gladly leaving the party of tourists which had taken possession of the hotel:

Some minds improve by travel; others rather  
Resemble copper, wire or brass,  
Which gets the narrower by going further.

In the tiny cabin of the ship they sat themselves down and curiously watched the passengers as they arrived. At one of the clock on a Saturday, with many a cheer from those watching upon the docks, they steamed away to the Northland, to the Land of Cold and Gold, Alaska.



Not even the Bay of Naples is bluer than the waters of Puget Sound. Wild flowers run down the shore to admire their beauty in its clear depths, blue-green firs crowd its banks, the snowy mountains of the Coast Range stand guard. Now the Straits of Juan de Fuca, at last the open ocean! That first evening aboard was lively and, the talk turning upon Alaska, the omnipresent statistician gave out some FACTS which were, for a wonder, interesting. Alaska has 4,000 miles of coastline, about two and a half times that of the rest of the United States, and the beach sand of all the Alaskan coast, according to Dr. Becker, contains enormous quantities of gold. Attempts to obtain this have been made at Yakutat Bay, south of Mount St. Elias, and on the west shore of Kadiak Island, but without encouraging success. Alaska is 1,000 miles from north to south, and is in area one-fifth of the entire United States. It has 11,000 bays and islands. The name was suggested by Sumner as Captain Cook had named the natives Alaskans. Even at half a cent an acre this country did not care for Alaska. Czar Nicholas twice proffered it, but 'twas not till warships approached New York and San Francisco, and England and France were contemplating recognizing the confederacy, that it was decided to purchase Russian America, principally to make the Czar friendly. The sale was concluded in 1867.

By the next day all this and more was forgotten. I wish to state right here that the Pacific is pacified in much the same fashion as Cuba was. And if it were "peaceful," it allowed no one else to be. Almost every passenger had some medicine warranted a sure preventive against sea-sickness and as people began to feel that life at best was but a vale of tears, they produced these remedies and insisted upon the others' trying them. One lady took some of her own "infallible"



cure. The effect, such as it was, was instantaneous. As she very elegantly expressed it, "I thought I had swallowed a rocket." After recovering strength she staggered to her room, got that bottle of medicine and threw it overboard, saying: "There, Mr. Whale, when you swallow that, you'll be good and seasick." Well, it isn't a pleasant subject, let us leave it. That's all an ocean voyage is to me, and sailors—men who while possessed of their five senses actually choose to be upon the sea, have always been unfathomable mysteries to me.

It was upon my first ocean voyage that a friend's letter contained some Bible verses which struck me as being wonderfully applicable:

"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep. For He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. *They reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.* He maketh it the storm calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet: so He bringeth them unto their desired haven."



## CHAPTER II

### DUTCH HARBOR AND UNALASKA

Some day my life ship shall cease its restless tossing, my sick heart have done with buffeting the waves. Trouble shall roll over me no more, neither shall I sink into its depths. Even the monotony of the life voyage shall be spent, and silently, without regret, I shall drift into the harbor of Peace, perchance to find moored there the treasure ships freighted long ago which I thought were lost at sea. I shall scarcely greet that day more gladly than the one which brought us in view of the Aleutians, to my sea-weary eyes veritable Isles of the Blest. Rising abruptly from the sea, desolate, silent, treeless, they look but half finished, as if God, finding that men had already begun to sin and to suffer, had hurried back to pleasanter lands. These mountain islands seem to wall the edge of the world. Forbidding not only, but surprised they seem. One mountain, I am sure, had never felt the step of man nor heard a child's laughter. No wonder it kept our ship in sight as long as possible. As we leaned over the rail watching it I said: "To think of spending one's life upon that crag, the Pacific behind, Bering Sea before, no sound, no change. I should die with the horror of it." A cheery voice answered, "If my husband and children were with me I could live in perfect content with never a word from the world, nor even this passing sight of a ship." I turned and looked sharply at her. Yes, she meant it. I believe in faith which can remove mountains, but to stand *upon* one, a



portrait monument of and to yourself! And not a home-y mountain with which you might become acquainted, with trees and wagon roads and animals, but that particular Aleutian desolation. Is there really such a love? It would be like awakening in His likeness and being satisfied.

It was late in the afternoon when we entered the dangerous pass approaching Dutch Harbor. Between Unimak and Aktan it is as difficult to choose as between the relative desirability of Scylla and Charybdis. Without the islands and along them, high, slender, sharp rocks stand sentinel, and beneath the water others conceal themselves to pierce the ships, enemies of their solitude. The Aleutians are volcanic and these rocks are also their scouts. It has often been noted that the "Needles" pierce through the sea to reconnoitre. If all's well, an island rises just beyond. Against them all the sea rages, rushing so furiously upon the unyielding battlements that he froths at the mouth.

As we neared Dutch Harbor the sun was setting and the hills, bathed in floods of pink and purple and gold looked ethereal. A water-fall sprang high in air from a cliff, straight to the sea. Millions of small white birds covered the water, and rose in clouds into the air. I have never seen these "murs" elsewhere, but at this entrance to Bering Sea their countless myriads sometimes literally obscure the sun. Just without the harbor stands a detached rock which bears a strange resemblance to a Russian priest in full canonicals. Touched by the crimson light as from some gorgeous cathedral window he stood blessing the harbor. The scene was of great and softened beauty. One old man said softly: "We have reached the Delectable Mountains."



It was growing dark as we entered Dutch Harbor—what a hideous name for such a magnificent place! Almost land-locked by mountains, the navies of the whole world might safely rest within it. Several vessels were lying there, each with a different country's flag at the mast head, and the light of the little hamlet blinked in the darkness.

Dutch Harbor is a coaling station. Another ship had precedence that night, and all rejoiced at the prospect of a day ashore. O the blessed ground! Columbus is said to have thrown himself upon the earth to embrace the New World. The solid ground seemed a new world to me after that heave-y old sea, and I felt like following his august example. But what was eminently proper in an admiral, a maker of history, a man of the Fifteenth century, would have been most ridiculous in a sea-sick little voyager, a scribbler, a woman of this cut-and-dried old Twentieth century.

The temperature never falls low in the Aleutians, owing to the Japan Current, but the winters are long, foggy, chilling one's very marrow, and so windy, they told me, that the very houses must be anchored.

The next morning we walked across the hills to Unalaska. O, that walk! It is one that my memory has often retaken without weariness and with delight ever. Its path winds close beside others, thousands of miles away in reality, and years apart. I feel the soft breathing of June against my face, the light green turf springing to meet my foot; wild flowers shyly peeking out everywhere at the strangers, mountains and sparkling sea greeting them in new beauty at every turn. Dutch Harbor and Unalaska are upon different islands. Their shores are strewn with pretty shells and barnacles and starfish, and one of the amusements is digging for delicious rock clams. While waiting for the Aleut



boys to row us across, we found many treasures which, afterward crushed in our trunks, cut and soiled our belongings and rasped our tempers. This is an old trick of mine. I should think that by this time I should have known that those lovely Delft-colored muscle shells would never reach home. I am always picking up such truck on my travels, which is invariably either broken or afterward discarded because of its weight, or because, apart from its surroundings, its charm was gone and I wondered why I had toted it away. One man found a beautiful light green flat stone covered with barnacles high enough for a unique match safe. I did want that. I really think that would have reached home.

The scenery at Unalaska is superb. If it were in Europe, the great American snob would besiege the odd little hamlet nestling at the mountain's foot and looking through vistas upon the sparkling sea of Bering. To the right rises the most distinctive mountain I ever saw. It looks like a huge wave, with wave upon wave ascending to its crest. It is treeless, but covered with a light green grass as bright as that which grows in early Spring along the sedges of a woodland brook. In the jagged rocks near the water breed the eagles, and huge ravens, larger than any I have ever before seen, flew everywhere.

Mount Makushin, a mildly active volcano, is on the island of Unalaska, and is the only one of the volcanoes on the Aleutians that has been ascended. Think of it, ye unpatriotic Americans who boast of having climbed to the Matterhorn's peak. Last year when both the American party and the Italian prince were on their way to attempt Mount St. Elias, Captain Anderson of the *Dora* said to the former, "If you don't scud up that mountain before that foreigner, I declare I'll leave



you in over winter." Sixty miles west of Unalaska is Mount Bogoslof, which has recently been in energetic eruption. But the most beautiful of them all is Mount Shishaldy on the island of Unimak, the largest of the Aleutians. This volcano is 8000 feet high and is said to greatly resemble Mount Fusi-yama, the pride of Japan, celebrated in picture, in song and story. When will all these strange and beautiful parts of our own country have their explorers, enthusiasts, lovers and singers?

Unalaska resembles other Northern stations as to buildings, company warehouses at the docks, the inevitable Greek church, a score of tiny wooden cottages in a row built by the company for its native workers, the horrible "barabbaras" or native dug-outs on the outskirts, and, in the case of Unalaska, a large Methodist mission at a beautiful curve of the beach. Whalers leave here for the Arctic, fur hunters make it their headquarters. Dutch Harbor is station for our revenue fleet, there is much coming and going of ships from all lands, fishing is fine—how I should enjoy a summer in and about this lovely place. I was shown through the fur warehouse where thousands of otter, mink, bear, fox, beaver, lynx, and marten skins hung. They looked better than they smelled. One of a well-known New York family had just returned from a hunt after sea-otter, and told me many interesting things, as we looked over the pelts. He was five years in the signal service north and for the past six has been hunting sea fur-bearing animals.

"Yes, I made a good otter catch this time, got fifty-six skins, but this year they are worth from \$150 to \$180 apiece only. Last year they brought as high as \$290. Of course they sell for four or five times that when dressed."



"Isn't that a beauty?" he said, flinging upon the floor a glistening "silver tip" otter skin. It was that. Each black hair gleamed at its end as if it were an infinitesimal faërie torch. Miladi will look very regal in that fur as she leans back in her cockaded sleigh. "Here," he continued, "are some inferior gray otter pelts. The Russians are the only people who know how to successfully dye them, so all these skins go direct to St. Petersburg. They're the people who know how to handle furs." I couldn't help replying, "I should think they would be. If Americans had such a climate, they would excel in handling furs. It's like the Russians' linguistic accomplishments. The fact is, if they can master their own language, every other is simply baby talk to them."

Otters are exceedingly timid, and the increasing number of vessels has driven them away from their usual haunts. Then they have been remorselessly slaughtered for many years. The biggest catch known about here was one hundred and fifty-six taken by a single schooner several years ago. Last year the best catch was one hundred and sixteen. Whites are not allowed to hunt otter ashore, nor foreigners within three miles of it, but natives may. Authorities say it will be but a short time before otters will be extinct in this part of the world. The schools contain from one hundred to two thousand. Last year there was a constant fusillade from the hunters carried out by five schooners. Seals, too, are dying out. What will the petted beauty of the near future do for the sumptuous furs which so enhance the loveliness of her face? Millionaires may be driven to stocking preserves for their fur animals as they do now for their game. Then when little Miss Vanderbilt is born, some baby seals, with sable babies to trim them, will be set apart for her



dowry; and grandmother Astor, dying, will bequeath "item, my seal muff and collar to my best beloved — as highest proof of my sense of her lifelong devotion." As for "the masses," there won't be so much as a fur glove among them. Even the land fur bearers will be exterminated by advancing civilization, and imitation rat-skin will command high prices.

Seals are unwary. They are best hunted in rough weather and when they are asleep, but it is useless to go out for otters unless it is perfectly calm. A ripple spoils it, for the hunter can't see the otter's nose, which is all the animal vouchsafes of himself above the water. This is one reason the fur is costly. A schooner bears all the expenses of the trip, even to ammunition, and has one-third of the catch. Sometimes a month will afford no right days for otter hunting; last year one schooner was out six weeks without an opportunity and the season is only about four months long. The best time is soon after daybreak, with the sea calm as a duckpond and a slight fog. Then all hands enter canoes and without a word or noise of any kind proceed in a straight line, each watching closely for the otter's snout. When any man perceives it, he quietly elevates his paddle and the line of canoes swiftly encircle the victim. The otter dives and remains under water as long as possible, about ten minutes. When he rises to the surface to breathe, the hunters affright him and he dives again and again, remaining beneath the water a shorter and shorter time until, exhausted, he can do no more, and the unfortunate otter is then clubbed to death or speared. The otter is generally found from twelve to thirty miles off shore, where he feeds on fish that swim between the surface and the bottom. When he finds himself near land he goes ashore to feed, but one man





UNALASKA — ALEUTIAN ISLANDS







told me he had killed otters in one hundred and twenty fathoms of water. It is odd that they prefer certain places and are never found far from them.

When I said I supposed natives are the best otter hunters, the answer was, "Not by any means. When you're successful in getting some otters, whites become excited and eager to pursue the chase—their race name is *Oliver Twist*. Every carcass is an incentive. But the Aleuts, if successful, soon tire. 'We have some. If we catch him not this year, why next,' and they want to go back to the ship." They eat the otter flesh, but there is no oil. Aleuts like to hunt the sea lion, for its flesh is favorite food; they use the skins for canoes, the stomach for bags to hold the blubber, the throat for the tops of boots, and the flippers for soles. The whites use sea lion whiskers for tooth-picks.

From the fur warehouse, I hurried after the others who had gone to the Greek church, but on the way, at the suggestion of one who knew "the holy father," we stopped to call upon him. The knock was answered by a Russian priest. If "cleanliness is next to godliness" be accepted literally, he must be in close proximity to the devil. His dirty, scant, tan-colored cloth robe fell to his feet. Its only decoration was spangles of grease spots, in sizes varying from a large number of spatters as if the father had been frying doughnuts, to several the size of a dollar. We were told the holy father was in counsel. I was glad of it; if the interior of the house looked as it smelled, I could forego the pleasure of the call without a pang. I am not a bigot; any church which practices and preaches purity, helpfulness, sobriety, and genuine love of God and man compels my respect. It is because the Greek priesthood and church in Alaska neither live nor teach



these cardinal virtues that I say emphatically that they are, generally speaking, an insult to a forbearing God, a disgrace to civilization, and a stumbling block to the natives. There are undoubtedly noble men among the Russian priests, but in Alaska, with few exceptions, they are grossly immoral, intemperate to beastliness, ignorant, gambling, lazy and grasping. At Fort Wrangell, a friend saw a Russian priest in his sacred robes, so drunk that it was almost impossible to continue the gambling whereby he was passing the time till he should be called to administer extreme unction to a dying man upstairs. Methinks I would go hence unshriven rather than mingle my last faint breath with this priest's, strong with quass. Quass is the horrible drink the Russians have introduced among the natives. It is brewed from sugar or molasses, and simply drives a man mad. It is so intoxicating that, as one described it to me, its devotees "must hold on the grass to keep from rolling off the ground."

At Unalaska, some time ago "the holy father" was an extreme type of this dangerous priesthood. The Aleuts would come for his blessing on their projected hunting trips. This valuable benediction he would exchange for the best skin of the man's catch. If the otter pelt was not sufficiently fine to suit the holy man, he would pour out a torrent of profanity and abuse and yell, "Do you expect to go to Heaven on a measly old skin like that?" Often the frightened "barbarian" would, out of his penury, *buy* a fine otter skin to placate the priest. He finally, in this and similar ways, amassed a fortune of several thousands and left his clerical duties for a time to spend a season in San Francisco, where he took a house, filled it with prostitutes, and remained until the last cent was squandered. Then he returned to his pastorate in Unalaska to shear



his flock. What said the Good Shepherd, "Feed my sheep?" I recall nothing about *fleeing* them. He of old "carried the lambs in his bosom;" but when Romanoff, the Russian priest, entered a village, young and old came to meet him on their knees.

Ruskin, always bold and plain, reminds us that "a Bishop means a person who sees. A pastor means one who feeds," and so logically says, "the most unbishoply character a man can have is therefore to be Blind. The most unpastoral is, instead of feeding, to want to be fed, to be a Mouth."

Bishop Nestor, whose monument stands in the little cemetery surrounding the little church in Unalaska, was revered by everybody as a saintly man. Pure, self-sacrificing, active, he greatly deplored the state of his clergy and the Alaskan church, and was indefatigable in seeking reform. The natives honored him, they regarded him as their spiritual father, but no neglected half breed children called him father in any other sense. He was drowned from a ship. It is reported that he had committed suicide while temporarily insane from overwork, but those who claim to know, say he was pushed overboard by one deputized to do it, as the memorial the bishop had prepared to forward to the Czar would probably have changed persons and things if brought to the Autocrat's notice. For this is the principal cause of such a ministry, that every Alaskan priest receives his commission direct from the Czar. In Alaska, it is a profession or a trade rather than a religious affair.

The results of this misconduct of a great majority of the whites on the island are everywhere seen in the neglected half-breed children, half of whom seem to bear one white man's name, by courtesy—and by various mothers. One of the leading company officials



has several children whom he does not even own. They are charity pupils at the mission, although he is rich. It is a shocking fact that not long ago a native woman and her daughter were both pregnant by the same "white" man—with a heart black as hell. The elder threatened her daughter if she dared to bear her child first, but Nature exists even in such unnatural beings, and the younger woman's poor little baby first opened its eyes upon this wicked world, whereupon the enraged grandmother threw the little thing into the fire. It was rescued, horribly burned, and lives yet, scarred with the mark of Cain.

On every hand are deformed, misshapen, hideous children. You see when the village is indulging in quass, babies are apt to be stepped upon in the dance, or to fall from the mother's nerveless arm only to lie, twisted and agonized and half-starved, till the orgy ends. In drunken rage, too, the prattling toddlers may be violently thrown out of the way. Worse than orphaned, these unfortunates grow up in ignorance and poverty and vice, while their fathers' wives, fair of face, wrapt in rich furs, sparkling with jewels, go their way in gay cities, and reckon not of the poor Aleut women over the sea. No wonder that "The fool has said in his heart there is no God."

The native houses are all alike, tiny brown cottages, close together, numbered, quite civilized, and with a narrow sidewalk in front. They are all owned by the company. The Aleut men fish and hunt for the company. The cottages are comparatively tidy and clean; some even have curtains and plants in tin cans at the windows. The natives belong to the Greek church, and in the corner of every living room is the inevitable tiny shrine, painted blue, white, and yellow, with tassels carved of wood. Near by hang cheap prints of the



Czar and Czarina. I asked one intelligent but delicate and dissipated looking woman why she did not have the President's—did she not know that Alaska belongs to the United States? She smiled agreeably, though the light of her smile was somewhat beclouded by an artificially blackened eye, colored, I was informed, in a recent society event where quass was poured by several charming young women—to adapt the account to social-column style. It is really surprising how awkward conversation becomes, with a black eye—I mean one whose sable hue, diversified with green and blue, exceeds the usual limit of the orb—staring one in the face. But I admit that her ease of manner exceeded mine own, the awkwardness was mainly on my part. She did not know the President's name, but was willing to hang his picture beside the others and to drape it with the flag that makes you free if I sent them to her. Would not that be an excellent use to put the left-over campaign pictures to, to send them to the Aleutians and interior Alaska?

The Russian priests seem to understand as little that the country is ours. They rule the natives like little czars. Two years ago the Russian bishop asked the Russian minister at Washington to demand the removal of every teacher in Unalaska. They misinterpret the treaty, which says that their religious institutions shall not be interfered with.

I met United States Commissioner Woodward and heartily laughed over his account of the ins and outs of justice in our colonies, as the British would say. In the three years he has been at Unalaska he has heard fourteen cases, mostly for assault. Two white men were tried for abducting young girls from the mission schools. "When I struck the island," said Mr. Woodward, "I found as my sole official possession, a huge



box of commissioners' reports. I rented this shabby house of the company, bought a thirty-dollar stove—the government had allowed me fifteen for that purpose, unpacked my worldly goods, and began my four years' term in this out-of-the-world place. The very next day the marshal brought me a murderer, and departed. Now, with the safest of jails and all modern conveniences, a murderer isn't a pleasant responsibility for one new at the business; but as there was no jail of any kind, and we have no guest chamber in our small domicile, he became positively embarrassing. "Chain him in the coal house," said my wife. This we did, though, dear me, he didn't want to get away; there was no place to escape to, just sea on all sides. He was only too glad to lounge around and be fed from our table. We were thankful when we shipped that man to the States. Well, we worried along without a jail till the survey departed. They had erected an observing shed on the beach, which of course they left. The marshal, who was now allowed the munificent sum of five dollars a month for a jail, eagerly seized upon this shed, which was little larger than a patrol box. He strengthened it a bit, but a good stout man can even yet simply pick up his prison on his shoulders and walk off like a snail. However," and the commissioner's eyes twinkled, "we don't have to worry about escaped convicts, for the marshal absolutely refuses to take any more prisoners. He says he doesn't propose to board every criminal in the Aleutians at his own expense at any such salary as he obtains." The whole ridiculous situation would afford a good plot for a comic opera, and I should receive a first-night box for the suggestion.

I don't wish to interfere in any way with the workings of our great American political machine, especially



as my classification among idiots, Indians, minors, and females precludes my responsibility in the matter; but even to an i., l., m., or f. it does seem as if a small percentage of political boodle might be very profitably diverted to uphold the dignity of the United States Government and to protect its citizens. Its commissioner at Unalaska occupies a position important already, and becoming more so as Dutch Harbor is on the way to the land of gold. He receives one thousand dollars a year and no perquisites of any kind. He is not allowed to augment his income by outside work, as some other commissioners do. Living is of course higher than in the States, and he removes his family and goods at his own expense. Mr. Woodward was refused even personal passage on the revenue cutter leaving San Francisco for Dutch Harbor. There is one advantage of such governmental niggardliness: in case a competent commissioner without much money is obtained, he must finish his term of four years, for he cannot resign, not being able to save enough to return home.

We visited the Methodist mission. It is wonderful what it accomplishes with these Aleut and half-breed girls. Aleuts, be it known, are no more Indians than we, and they resent being called so. They are probably Asiatics, and strongly resemble the Japanese. The pupils read to us with a musical and distinct enunciation, which was very readily traced to their teacher. They sang very sweetly, too, with almost invariably good voices. One poor child was pathetic in her physical ugliness, dwarfed, one-sided, hunch-backed, and cross-eyed, but her mouth was quite pretty, as I discovered with relief, and she sang like a lark. How pleased she was when I told her so. Poor girl, whose parents' brutality may have saved her to a virtuous



and helpful life! The pupils, under instruction, do all the housework and cooking, they sew and knit, and with it all are nearly as advanced as white girls of their age in their studies. They are very lady-like and courteous, and some of them are quite pretty. One, I remember, was tall and slender, with large, dark eyes and curling black hair, bright and very graceful. Her ambition, she confided to me, was to go to Carlyle and to be a teacher. My heart warmed toward her. Yet that lovely girl may soon become the mistress of some brute. It is almost impossible, one can see, to find the least idea of virtue or tendency toward decency among children so born and bred, and the mission teachers labor against the greatest odds. Yet several prize girls went to Carlyle last Fall and others hope to. They win friends, too. Mr. P. B. Weare is educating little Parsha in Chicago, and the day we all went over from the ship, Mrs. Eli Gage, daughter-in-law of the Secretary of the Treasury, a young and generous woman, took a great fancy to a pupil who happened to bear her name, Sophy, and assumed her expenses at the mission. Mrs. D. S. Thayer, of Brockton, Mass., whose portrait hangs in the neat little parlor, has been one of the principal workers and givers. Mrs. Anna F. Beiler, of Washington, D. C., was at the mission on a tour of inspection for her church. Mrs. Beiler is the wife of the vice-chancellor of the projected American university. She is a woman of wonderful executive ability, fearless of everybody and everything, and as one of the men said, "the most liberal-minded and level-headedest Christian I ever saw."

As I sat listening, my eyes wandered to the bookcase—trust them for that. It is wonderful people have so little idea what "heathen" children would enjoy and be benefited by. For instance, a "Report of the



Department of Agriculture." I smiled as I recalled a friend who received from a scientific intimate, just to show him what was the trend of his work, a pamphlet treating of peach yellows. In acknowledgment, my friend wrote that he had to thank him for a sleepless night, that he had perused the thrilling pages with breathless interest, unable to retire until the last fascinating page was regretfully reached. What would he have said to this "Official Catalogue of the World's Columbian Exposition?" However, other Aleut tastes are presumably satisfied with "Nelson on Infidelity," and an old-fashioned love story illustrated by wood cuts which, happily, are no more. Why not send this mission and others like it in Alaska, some of our own children's books which they have outgrown, some bound Youth's Companions, Golden Days, etc., juvenile history of this country, "Zigzag" travels, in short, such books as you choose for your own fortunate girls? The companies have been very good in carrying such things to the missions, and will doubtless continue to be, even with the enormous pressure upon the capacity of the freight occasioned by this unprecedented rush to Alaska.

I visited some of the native dugouts, "barrabaras" as they call them, escorted by the missionary teacher who seems not only to be loved and admired by the pupils, but by all on the island. She is the sort that accomplishes something, being young, wide-awake, enthusiastic, and not by any means least, pretty. She has a lovely complexion and laughing eyes and is altogether good to look upon. She is a Brooklyn girl, yet says, and looks it, that she is quite happy and content in this dull little hamlet in the Northern Pacific. Instead of bursting rudely into a native's home, as I have seen so many "benefactors" do, she always knocked;



and then, with a cheery word and smile, made herself genuinely welcome.

These barrabaras are something horrible. They are small dugouts, with roofs rounded but little above the ground, like mammoth ant hills. They resemble Heaven in but one particular: the proud cannot enter therein. I bent almost double and half fell into one. There were two rooms; and suffice it to say that everything in the way of rags and filth that wasn't in one apartment *was* in the other. It smelled so I could hardly see, or perhaps my eyes were dimmed by the pitiful group. A woman sat upon the ground, for there was no floor. She was pitifully thin and the rags scarcely covered her. On each side of her was a rude wooden cradle in which lay a wailing baby. The woman was bent with sickness, and coughed till quite exhausted. She was too weak to hold the twin babies who looked half famished as they lay upon their dirty beds of rags, but one cradle she rocked with her bare foot, the other with an emaciated hand. Two children sat listlessly upon the ground. It was plain to be seen that the woman was dying of consumption in patient misery. She asked Miss Mellor to ask the doctor for some more medicine, as her "cold" was worse, and "Oh, it pains so here," she said, dully, laying a scrawny hand upon her lungs. I was glad to get back into the fresh air and the comfort which a beautiful bit of scenery always imparts. Nothing appears quite so hopeless out of doors, not even such problems as this woman's misery. At any rate, I reminded myself, it is almost ended. A few weeks more, at worst, of hacking cough and cruel pain, and then a freed soul shall rise whitely from the squalor, and, pausing but a moment to look once again upon the familiar scene, the treeless mountains and sparkling sea, the stately ships



and filthy hovels, shall rise lightly above it all, understand it all, and surely, ah surely, in a juster world find its "chance."

All the small islands near Dutch Harbor are grass-grown. It is strange they have not been stocked with cattle, but all meat is shipped from the States. It is part of Sheldon Jackson's plan, however, to place a pair or two of reindeer upon every one of the Aleutians. Their increase would afford food for the shipwrecked, many of whom have been starved to death upon these inhospitable islands, rock-girt, and approached by perilous passes. It is an inexplicable fact that there is not a single light house nor buoy off this entire coast of Alaska. What excuse has the government for this criminal negligence? Wrecks are very common. Three years ago, word was brought to Dutch Harbor that a ship had gone down off one of the islands, and that the survivors were in desperate straits. *The Bear* was in winter quarters and her boilers being repaired, but immediately the cutter was got ready and in four hours, with all steam on, was hurrying toward Umnak, where a dreadful sight met the eyes of men inured to witnessing suffering. The emaciated survivors sat about a small fire, watching with famished eyes a kettle which contained meat accursed. In their extremity they had first eaten one of their number who had just died. They had hoped against hope, for a ship, and starvation was again seizing upon them when they remembered one of their fellows who had succumbed to his sufferings two weeks before, and had been buried. With loathing and horrid hurry, they had disinterred the decayed body and it was this hideous thing which was cooking over the fire when the officers entered the improvised hut. So intent were the sufferers that they had not heard



the relief party. When carried to the ship—for they were too weak to walk—they could scarcely speak. One of them went mad when he saw food, and had to be bound. They were carefully fed a little at a time, and all recovered. One of the rescuing party who was relating the incident is not an emotional man, but his face worked as he told me of what to us both seemed the crowning horror. As they lifted one man, a human finger fell from his pocket. He had concealed it from his fellows, hoping by the theft to prolong his wretched life to the last. Such horrors, and they have been many, the stocking of the Aleutians with reindeer would prevent.

But to turn to more cheerful things, the custom house officer told me he was breeding blue foxes on a small, near-by island. The fur is now quite fashionable. The only reason for calling them blue must be that advanced by Mark Twain for naming his dog Spot—because it hadn't any spots. There will yet be money made hereabouts in such ventures.

We reached the ship late in the day, tired almost to imbecility, but after a most delightful experience, quite resigned to sailing in the night, knowing that but four more days would bring us to St. Michael.

I wonder if a yachting trip among the Aleutians will ever become fashionable? I know one thing, I should hugely enjoy one. Do you realize that these giant stepping stones, peaks of a submerged mountain chain which binds this continent to Asia, extend thirty degrees west of Hawaii? The island of Attu, the furthestmost of the Aleutians, lies two thousand miles west of Sitka; and San Francisco (it is hard to realize it), is several hundred miles east of the longitudinal center of our great country, of whose beauty the sun never tires.



## CHAPTER III

### BERING SEA AND ST. MICHAEL

After the stop at Dutch Harbor we quite recovered spirits and appetite, and at the first turn of that deafening wind-up bell, there was a general stampede to the table. Sitting contentedly on deck, neither thinking a thought nor dreaming a dream, just soaking up sunshine, I began to feel that sailors were not so idiotic, after all. Leaning idly over the rail, I watched the "Portuguese man-of-war" fleet sailing by like a faery armada, just as eager, tiny vessels, to reach their destination as we are. They consider it fully as important, too, and mayhap it is. Dark at the bottom, shaped exactly like the ship which suggested their name, they cover the sea in numbers far exceeding all the barks afloat. Fearlessly each tiny ship of pearl spreads its white sail to the wind and, with the great Pilot of All Seas to guide, "sails the unshadowed main." How the jelly fish glow in the sun! Taken aboard, their colors fade and they shrivel under your curious eye. When shall we learn to be content to enjoy beauty without vainly seeking to make it our very own? I once saw a man holding a delicate flower and roughly and greedily seizing upon its perfume. But the flower feared him, and resented his violence, so she drooped her fair head, and her breath failed. "Bah," he said, "the scent's quite gone; how these silly things fade!" and he flung the flower into the dust and set his heel upon it. I hated him, and my glance involuntarily fell upon his wife's pale face. He had treated her as he had done the flower. Her bloom was



gone and her spirit broken. He had flung her into the dust, too, but the "silly thing" lived on, more's the pity.

Then the whales! like a child I watched them by the hour as they spouted in the distance, speculating where next their fountains would play in the sun, beautiful as those of Versailles, laughing as they occasionally stood on their heads and flapped their great tails in clumsy sport, and counting the "school." What indeed do they learn in this school? Deep sea navigation, of course; the hidden haunts and habits of the sea-serpent, the location of new islands which rise hissing from the sea's depths, and the disappearance of others from the light of day into the darkness of watery abysses; also the facts about the polar sea. Oh, the whales know a thing or two we mortals might be glad to learn. In attendance upon them are the pretty little whale birds, their private secretaries, whose business it is to keep off the parasites which torment these lords of the deep, just as they do other great people. I saw an albatross, too, bird as immortal as the Phoenix since the Ancient Mariner told his grewsome tale. And I saw several sea parrots, duck-size, body unbroken black, with brilliant, scarlet feet and beak. The cock has pale yellow aigrette tufts at the side of his head. These parrots are said to come from Japan. Their flesh is eaten, like almost anything, by the Eskimos, while further inland the beaks are prized for trimming ceremonial dancing aprons.

We entered the ice fields and slowly steamed in and out among the bergs of glistening white, whose crags here and there act as prisms forming gorgeous colors. All so brilliant is it, under the bright sun that one's eyes were almost dazzled to see the seals basking themselves on the ice, their wet coats part of the universal glare. They watched us curiously till prudence



suggested flight, and they wriggled awkwardly but rapidly down, and sliding into the sea, glided about gracefully, coming up often very near the ship and darting away again.

Two hundred and twenty-two miles north of Unalaska, but west of our course, lie the Priboloff Seal Islands, which, with the surrounding waters, furnish almost all this much-prized fur to commerce. The islands have long been leased by the United States to the North American Commercial Company, and the revenue since 1870 has more than reimbursed this country for the amount paid for all Alaska. These two islands, St. Paul and St. George, each has a school supported by the company for the Aleuts and ninety-eight per cent of the children attend. No one may put foot on these little islands without special permission from the Secretary of the Treasury, and there is no passenger vessel, so that one must reach them by revenue cutter. No wonder, touching at such lands, presenting fortunes in furs, the Russians and others should have gone crazy upon the return of Vitus Bering, who, in 1741, explored this sea. Thousands of people embarked in even crazier crafts than those pressed into this present search for the golden fleece, more than one hundred and fifty years after.

As we neared St. Michael's Island, we could plainly see the largest island of Bering Sea, St. Lawrence, the scene of a tragedy in 1878. Starvation and pestilence carried off the entire population of 400. When the revenue cutter visited the island in 1880, only decaying bodies and falling houses were left, not one escaped to tell the tale. A village now stands on the extreme northwest corner, and of it Dr. Sheldon Jackson, in his "Facts about Alaska," writes:

"The houses are from 20 to 50 feet in size. For a



distance of five or six feet above the ground the walls are built of driftwood, whalebone, or timbers and planks from shipwrecked vessels. These are placed on end, side by side, forming an inclosure in a circular or oblong form. The cracks between these planks are stuffed with moss. The rafters are covered with walrus and seal skins, forming the roof. Some roofs are in the shape of a cone and others of a dome. The interior is partitioned off around the sides with deer-skin curtains, forming sleeping apartments. All around, inside and outside, are filth, dirt, sleds, spears, snowshoes and household utensils. The houses and tents are located with no reference to order or street lines. The sleds are shod with bone. On a few small ones, the whole runner was made of a walrus tusk. If the building is a very large one there is a row of supporting poles on each side, midway between the center and sides. Over the rafter poles are stretched walrus hides. These are held in position by rawhide ropes, attached to which and hanging down the sides of the building are the vertebræ of whales, large stones, and old iron from shipwrecked vessels. This anchorage both stretches the skins and prevents them from being blown off. These skins, being translucent, let in a great deal of light. There are no windows in the house, and but a small opening, about two and a half feet above the ground, for a door. Fire, when they have any, is made on the dirt floor in the center of the room. Each building is occupied by several families. Near the house is a scaffold, made of posts of the jaw bones of the whale. These are seven to ten feet high and ten feet wide. On these are placed the skin boats, harness of the dogs, meat, etc., so as to be out of the reach of dogs. Upon one of these, attached to the whalebone cross-beam, was a child's swing, made of walrus rope.

"I saw several excavations where underground houses had once been, and one such house still standing with the roof partially fallen in. The sides were composed of walrus skulls laid up like a stone wall. In this house were some corpses, together with the spear, arrowheads and personal belongings of the dead.



"Passing from house to house I was followed by a crowd of dirty but bright-looking children. From the eldest to the child which was just able to talk they asked for tobacco, which is used by both sexes and all ages, down to the nursing child. Five little girls, from four to ten years of age, gave a native dance. They commenced with a swinging motion of the body from side to side, throwing their weight alternately upon each foot. This was accompanied by an explosive grunt or squeak, as if the air was being violently expelled from the lungs. As they warmed up they whirled around, writhed and twisted their bodies and distorted their faces into all manner of shapes and expressions, until they would fall down with dizziness."

Not far north of St. Lawrence is King's Island, containing a population of about 200, one of the strangest settlements in the world. They are cave dwellers. Quoting from the same interesting pamphlet of Dr. Jackson:

"The island is a great mass of basalt rock, about a mile in length, rising from the sea with perpendicular sides from 700 to 1,000 feet above the water. On the south side the wall is broken down by a ravine rising at an angle of 45 degrees, and is filled with loose rock. A great permanent snow bank fills the ravine from the bottom to the top of the mountain. On the west side of the snow is the village of Ouk-ivak, which consists of some 40 dwellings or underground houses, partly excavated in the side of the hill, and built up with stone walls. Across the top of these walls are large poles made from the driftwood that is caught floating around the island. Upon these are placed hides and grass, which are in turn covered with dirt. A low tunnel or dirt-covered hall way, 10 to 15 feet long, leads directly under the center of the dwelling. This is so low that it is necessary to stoop and often creep in entering. At the end of the hall directly overhead is a hole about 18 inches in diameter. This is the entrance to the dwelling above. Frequently in summer, these caves become too damp to live in. The people then erect a summer house upon the top of the winter



one. The summer house consists of walrus hides, stretched over a wooden frame, making a room from 10 to 15 feet square. These summer houses are guyed to rocks with rawhide ropes, to prevent them from being blown off into the sea. The entrance is an oval hole in the walrus hide, about two feet above the floor. Outside of the door is a narrow platform about two feet wide, leading back to the side of the hill. Some of these platforms are from 15 to 20 feet above the roofs of the huts below them. Across the ravine from the village, at the base of the perpendicular sides of the island is a cave, into the mouth of which the surf dashes and roars. At the back of the cave is a large bank of perpetual snow. This cave is the storehouse of the whole village. Walrus and seal meat is stored away in rooms excavated in the snow. As the temperature in the cave never rises above freezing point, meat so stored soon freezes solid and keeps indefinitely."

It is but 2,500 miles from Seattle to St. Michael's, yet with the only vessels obtainable for the unexpected rush, the voyage took fourteen and a half days. It was a beautiful evening which brought us in view of St. Michael across the placid waters of Norton Sound, but it was just midnight as we cast anchor. Low distant hills were bathed in an amethyst light, the sun had set but a little time before and several of the passengers were writing letters dated "Midnight," for in the summer at this latitude there is no darkness. Just without the harbor is a curious little island which strongly resembles, as you approach it by ship, a large scow with a load of hay and a man standing in front. Sea vessels cannot land there, and all goods must be lightered a mile off shore, in fact there is not a good harbor on the western coast of Alaska. We stayed aboard ship, for the large hotel since erected by the North American Trading and Transportation Company was then but just begun, going ashore by the river boat which took off the freight, by the company's steam



launch, or the swift little "Cub," steam launch from the *Bear*, which was anchored further out. The island is about fifteen miles long, rising from the sea by gradual slope to mountains in the distance, among which there are said to be extinct volcanoes. It is an upheaval of lava, and is covered with peat to the depth of from two feet to fifteen. In other parts of Alaska a geologist says this peat extends from 150 to 300 feet down. Vegetation grows rankly on top of this rich deposit and decay is arrested by freezing. If the summer were not so short this peat, cut as in Ireland and dried in the sun, would make the best of slow fuel. As it is, the hot summer sun simply thaws the surface for a few inches, or at most a couple of feet, and converts the tundras into bogs over which it is difficult to walk anywhere without sinking into the black mire. In many places the trails to the mines are all but impassable for this reason. At every step the burdened miner sinks to his knees or higher in the heavy mud.

St. Michael's has a narrow curving beach of powdered lava as black as coal dust. Lava rocks are scattered over it and a low bluff covered with deep grass and gay with wild flowers rises behind it. Among these were a sort of blue bell with a perfume like cherry blossoms and a curious silky tuft like a faëry paint brush. The stems of all Alaska flowers seem pipey, and they easily part from the soil.

Following the beach from Fort Get There, the North American Trading and Transportation Company's post, it is perhaps a mile to the town of St. Michael which was founded by the Russians in 1835. One of the block houses erected at that time from logs brought from Sitka still stands, and the little cannon from it now points out to sea under the flagmast on the bluff.



Here stands the little Greek church. One Sunday when I was at St. Michael I attended service there. It was conducted by a Russian priest from up the river, for they have no regular minister here. Father Orloff read the service devoutly and never was there apparently a more devout congregation. The Eskimo women were in gala attire, clean calicoes with the gayest of silk handkerchiefs over their heads, and the children were tricked out like little animated crazy quilts, bits of every obtainable material, if only bright in hue, being sewed to their gowns. Like all native children they were quiet and showed not a moment's uneasiness. The men seemed proud of being conversant with the service. It was an odd sight, which I enjoyed. Part of the church was cut off by a screen covered with wallpaper, blue, with stars of Christmas tinsel pasted on. The acolytes, I suppose you would call them, were men in drill parkas, none too clean, and as they sung the responses worshipfully and with sweet voices, they scratched with one accord. For, though in connection with a church service it hardly seems suitable to speak of this, every Alaskan native is, to put it delicately, the center of a busy community. It would probably be revengeful satisfaction to the native if he knew that Addison says, "A very ordinary telescope shows us that a louse is itself a very lousy creature."

Speaking of scratching reminds me of the mosquitoes. I do not expect to do justice to the subject, for nothing but the most profane language, long and loud, could do that. From the first thaw under the spring sun till the very end of the summer, these rapacious insects rule the air. They are fearless, ferocious, and omnipresent. Many old residents told me that because of the mosquitoes they really preferred the long, dark, terrible winter. These pests kill huge bears, stinging



them about the eyes till they lie helplessly down, unable to find food, and perish. Nothing keeps them off. Several of us had unguents which we had believed infallible, but they proved to be the most appetizing of sauces with their steady diet,—us. The only thing we didn't try was a thick coat of tar and lard, which a woodsman has since told me no mosquito can abide—however, I don't think I could either. Kill one and such a congregation gathers for the funeral that it's lost time. They seem to slight Indians for the more dainty white meat, and they prefer the young and fair—I was badly bitten. One poor little child wore a bracelet of bites, each as large as a bean, and another's face was discolored all over, with one eye entirely closed by their stings. At St. Michael one of the men was so badly poisoned by the mosquitoes that he was driven into fever. Afterward, on the Yukon boat, while in mid-stream, it wasn't so bad, but whenever we stopped to wood they swarmed aboard, covered the screens till they were black, singing the *Marseillaise* in the most bloodthirsty way. They dashed in after you when you opened the screen doors and cached themselves in the state-rooms until such time as you tried to sleep. When adjusting my camera, they would gleefully cover my poor hands. I have located members of the party who were hidden in the tall grass, by halos of mosquitoes encircling their heads, filled, I doubt not, with most unsaintly thoughts by reason of these very clouds of witnesses. One of the sufferers insists that they bite before they light.

The natives of Alaska are natural actors, and their dances, held during the long winter night, commemorate various things. It is not strange that the mosquito pest should be one of these. I remember to have seen this danced at the World's Columbian Exposition



by the Indians of the coast about Sitka, for the amusement of the Spanish Infanta. As usual, the Indians divided into two parties, each with a leader. At a grunt from him, one group began to scratch and wriggle and shrug with amusing fidelity. After exhausting their resources of mimicry, the other leader signaled for his party to out-do the first. One Indian, I remember, fairly shone among the all-star aggregation, and as he flung himself in seeming desperation upon the ground at the Infanta's feet to crush the varmints, Eulalia laughed till she cried.

Some who had come to Alaska without mosquito netting went about like the foolish virgins of old trying to buy, but there was but little in the stores, and that was soon gone at fifty cents a yard, which was the price of thin cheese-cloth. Bombazine or sleazy cheese-cloth is best, made into a curious bird-cagey affair with a puckering string. Several had bought colored ones of sportsman's outfitters in the States. One was green, one bright orange, and one an ear-splitting magenta. In these cages we were a sight for gods and men. They hurt our eyes, spoiled our tempers, and heated our blood, for it was now  $87^{\circ}$  in the shade. So at last most of us abjured the hideous things, and with a leafy branch in each hand, as if it were perpetual Palm Sunday, went our unquiet way. Repose of manner is absolutely impossible on the Yukon in mosquito time. At first we rubbed our irritated bodies warily, but bless you, everybody scratches in Alaska. People stand talking, rubbing one foot with the other without either person's even noticing it. The mosquitoes bite through heavy cloth and even shoe leather. The best contrivance I saw for bodily protection against these infamous mosquitoes—you would not consider my language strong if you had summered with them in



Alaska—was one that many of the old miners wore. It could be cheaply bought here, though on the Yukon it costs five dollars. A thin, narrow collar, buttoned like a corset steel, from which several similar bands crossed over to form a cage about a foot high. The net is thrown over this and tied. The advantage is that a man can not only work in this contrivance, but sleep in it; as the head lies between the slats and the cage bounces away from the face, giving air. Windows and doors in Alaska are covered with net, but it seemed to me to confine the pesky things within rather than keep them out. Nowhere else do you so realize that there is no rest for the wicked, and that all men are sinners. Even night time brings no relief, for darkness never comes till the last mosquito has gone into winter quarters. Such a funny thing happened at St. Michael. One newcomer hung a bright red mosquito net over his bed in his tent. It rained in the night, and when he awakened he screamed for help, thinking he had been murdered in his sleep and was weltering in his own gore. After the mosquitoes have done their worst, small black gnats take a hand, or rather a bill, which bills are hooked. Though not, mercifully, so plentiful as mosquitoes, these gnats are industrious, and pinch like poverty.

The Indians account for the mosquitoes thus: Once upon a time there was a great big wicked spirit in the form of an enormous spider, which would swoop down upon men and suck both spirit and life blood from their breasts, leaving their bodies empty shells, like those of the flies the earth-spider sucks. Men suffered long without relief from this wicked spirit, until their cries aroused the sympathy of a good spirit, who promised to rid them of the demon. So the good spirit built a huge fire and pushed the wicked spirit



into it. Being immortal, he could not be wholly destroyed, but he shriveled, and shriveled, and shriveled, until, as a tiny insect, unregarded he escaped from the fire, and has ever since enjoyed tormenting people. Insultingly he sings as he stings, then lays upon the tiny wound an infinitesimal coal from the fire in which he had suffered.

I started one day to go over to the native village, and as I stumbled along the damp ground and through the long grass, escorted by clouds of mosquitoes and yet thoroughly enjoying the novelty of it all, I met a witty woman who, with her husband, is now buried alive in Circle City. Uncertain of the direction, I asked it of her. "Go just a little further in this path," she said, "and then follow your nose. The stockyards is white rose to that smell." And it was so. A few steps brought me to the edge of the slope, fully half a mile away, and the strength of the odor which assailed my nostrils from those few huts was mighty as all the perfumes of Araby, but resembled them in no wise else. Each "house" contained but one room, which was *something* to be thankful for, and its roof of peat, often growing green and gay with flowers, was the family garret whereupon were stored dog-sleds, snowshoes, drying pelts, etc. Somewhat back from the hamlet were graves, which did not smell quite so bad. They were piled with driftwood, which was hung with old kettles, wooden bowls, and other treasures.

When I returned to St. Michael, I met Father Barnum, and stopped for a talk. He is delightful company, and so full of information that one cannot be with him for five minutes without learning something. He is small, slight, with an intellectual, refined face, smiling but rather cynical in expression. Father Barnum is of the well known Baltimore family whose



ancestors came to this country in 1629, so he is thoroughly American *if* a Jesuit. His family are Protestants, and *did* protest vehemently against his entering the priesthood, to which he is said to have brought a great fortune. He has been in Alaska seven years, taking long sledge rides through the bitter weather when it is impossible to wash or change his clothes, returning to his lonely shack covered with vermin. He insists he is happy and content—and he ought to know, but he looks as if he would be more in place in the luxurious library of his old home down South, flashing his ready wit at dinner parties and controlling affairs. Father Barnum has a large and valuable collection of ancient stone implements gathered in Alaska.

I met Mr. Inglestadt, a huge, brawny Norwegian, the picture of a viking of old. His blue eyes have looked undaunted upon dangers and exposures in many lands. He and Nansen were school boys together. Mr. Inglestadt speaks Eskimo, so he succeeded in obtaining for Mrs. Beiler a labret from the cheek of an aged man who came up just then. The poor old fellow had never been pretty, but with one empty eye socket, and the hideous hole in his cheek from which he had removed the labret, he was something horrible. Asked how he lost his eye, it was needless for Mr. Inglestadt to translate his reply, for a significant gesture told us that it had been gouged out by a man's thumb during a quass reign. These labrets are curious things, still very largely worn by natives further north and in retired places. "Labret" is from the Latin *labium*, lip, but in fact it is more often worn through the cheek. Sometimes there are two or three. They are generally made of stone, jade, or slate, but sometimes of walrus or mammoth



ivory, crystal, or coal—a black-diamond stud, so to speak. Lea & Perrin obtain free and novel living advertisements and an incontrovertible testimony to the wide spread use of their Worcestershire sauce in an occasional Esquimo wearing one of their glass stoppers, the name plainly discernible, thrust through his yellow face. I saw two natives thus beautified. When a labret is removed, it leaves a sickening hole like another mouth. This explains the tale of an ancient traveler that the natives of these Arctic regions had two mouths. In Southeast Alaska, these labrets are still commonly worn, especially by women. Everywhere in Alaska tattoo marks are usual and to the initiated indicate age and caste.

At St. Michael, one of the company official's wives invited me into her house, the unmistakable abode of a lady, the world over. Photographs, wild flowers upon the table, ingenious contrivances for making the best of things, were there. I noted a wooden peg in the wall. 'Twas for ventilation. The wind blows fiercely at St. Michael in the winter and is so bitterly cold that rooms are aired in a moment in this way. This lady, who was young and pretty, with the Englishwoman's sweet voice, expected to be the only white woman in St. Michael and for a long distance thereabout during the winter of eight long, weary months. "But," said she cheerily, "I paint and embroider and enjoy sledding and skating and snow-shoeing, and I shan't be one bit lonely." There's a pioneer for you!

Thinking of all this, I passed down the little street which was decorated, as for some queer festival, with hundreds of marten skins hanging in festoons to dry, stopped to wonder over the great mammoth's tusks near the store, and met cheery Mr. Andreas, the customs inspector. He was just rejoicing over the arrival



of his newspapers. He subscribes for several, and has the whole year sent up at once. "Then," said he, "I arrange them carefully in proper order and read my newspaper every morning after breakfast on the right day of the month, only a year old. In this way I get my news consecutively and enjoy a morning paper all through the winter, for I don't allow myself to read ahead. You don't know what company it is and how civilized I feel." Mr. Andreas has been at St. Michael for four years.

That night a number of "kiaks" came about the ship, their occupants bringing fish and curios for sale. These long, narrow boats are very much pointed and easily overturned. A light frame is covered with seal-skin with the hair removed. The occupant uses one paddle, changing it rapidly from hand to hand. A man will often emerge from the hole, after him his wife, who had been stretched out in one end of the almost air-tight boat, and two or three children from the other end. The Eskimos are very economical with air, and there is plenty of it in Alaska. They handle these kiaks in a marvelous way, riding them far out to sea when a life-boat would not risk the tossing waves. No Eskimo child seems too young not to have already learned to paddle the tippy things. Our ancestors of Britain dared the sea in boats almost identical, having tough willow frames covered with bullock-hide.

These kiaks are fitted out with numerous hunting spears, harpoons, and fishing tackle, each thrust through its appropriate thong on the outside of the light craft. The Eskimo are famous hunters of whale and seal, and there isn't a part as big as your hand of either animal that they do not utilize. The whales near St. Michael are mostly belugas or hump-backs. Further



north the "Greenland" whale flourishes, from one of which is often taken two tons of the baleen or whalebone which furnishes his huge mouth. This whalebone forms a sieve to strain and retain the small crustaceans that afford him his food, for the whale's throat is very small. This whalebone has hair-like fibers. These are used for paint brushes. The blubber is found under the whale, serving to lighten his weight, keep him warm, and afford him an air cushion when he suddenly drops himself into deep water. This blubber is one or two feet thick, fibrous, and containing the oil so valuable in commerce. There is sometimes thirty tons of it on a single whale. Whales seem peaceful sort of things, except when harpooned, but they suffer dreadfully from parasites. Molluscs adhere to their backs, crustaceans feed upon them, another imbeds itself in the flesh and eats it, while the whale-louse sometimes cover the poor things so closely that they look actually white. Whales have been found with almost the entire epidermis eaten off by these lice.

Eskimo, by the way, is an insulting name that the natives never apply to themselves. It means "raw-fish eater." They call themselves "Innuits," which means "our people." The Innuits inhabit the whole coast of Alaska from the islands of the Arctic Ocean along Bering Sea and down the peninsula as far as Mount St. Elias, with only the exception of a short distance about Cook's Inlet and Copper River, where the Indians have asserted themselves. These Innuits are larger than their Greenland and Labrador brethren. They are sometimes six feet tall. They have yellow skins, twinkling black eyes, thick lips, high cheek bones and coarse hair, much resembling the Chinese. In the narrow strait which separates North America from



Asia, only forty-six miles away, are the Diomed Islands. Three hundred Innuit live upon them. Here Russia's possessions lie but two miles from our own, for to that country belongs the largest island of the group.

At St. Michael there are a number of Eskimo carvers in ivory, who are already driving quite a trade among returning miners, who buy their "curios" at big prices. They use the walrus ivory, purchasing the tusks at fifty and seventy-five cents a pound of the officers and crews of the revenue cutters, who obtain them in Siberia and of the Eskimo further North. The walrus looks very fierce with these long tusks, but the fact is he uses them for nothing more warlike than digging clams and other shellfish for his food.

But now all was excitement in the harbor of St. Michael. The Weare came in like a modern successful Argonaut. It was reported to have \$1,500,000 aboard in gold dust. I saw boxes full of it, so heavy that all the strength of my love of money was not enough to move them a hair's breadth, though one was offered me if I could "budge it."

Among the passengers were the now well known Berrys. A year before, Clarence Berry and his bride had tramped wearily over the pass, and arrived worn, all but penniless, at Forty Mile, only to be discouraged by a letter from Mr. Berry's partner advising them not to come on. But it was too late, they were "in," also "in for it," they feared. They were among the lucky ones of Klondike's first, and now they were on their way back to their home in Fresno, California, with their golden treasure, not with anything like the \$100,000 with which they were credited, but still with a goodly fortune and more in the ground behind. Mrs. Berry, instead of being the delicate young girl depicted



in illustrated papers, is a tall, brawny woman, strong and determined. She had quarts of nuggets in cans, bottles, etc., but she did not, as reported, actually mine these, but picked them up as they lay amongst the pay gravel atop the dump. It is rather a curious fact about Clarence Berry's grandfather, who was much respected in his neighborhood, that he and his two sons married a mother and two daughters.

Those who did not turn over their gold to the company for safe keeping were obliged to watch their treasure closely. There were usually two, one always in the stateroom. So many have asked me, were they not wildly excited? Not in the least, many of them seemed hardly gratified even. They looked tired, and wore that subdued expression, especially those that had been long in the country, which I afterward noted in so many miners' faces. Their excitement over the potatoes we brought was far greater than their enthusiasm over their gold. They hadn't seen a potato for over a year.

Recalling the wild excitement occasioned all over the world by this boatload who went down on the Portland, it will be scarcely credible when I repeat that there was absolutely no agitation over it in Alaska. Everywhere it was as quiet as a deaf mute asylum. Even we soon lost the excitement which their arrival occasioned. I remember one small incident which partially explains this. One of the Canadian officials was coming out with his little boy. When Mrs. Berry was showing her nuggets this tot called out, "Div me nud-det, nud-det." The poor little fellow had never seen a toy, and the joys of rocking-horses and top boots and "ingines" lay ahead of him. It seemed really pitiful to me that such a baby should notice so paltry a thing as babies reckon gold. The fact is, friends,



that in this world we always pay for what we get.  
Nothing but salvation is free. Miners pay, do not  
doubt, pay heavily, for their gold.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE LITTLE ESKIMO TOWN OF STEBBINS

I once knew a man who might have posed, and in sooth did pose, as the Vivian Montmorency of many a young girl's dream. He had large, soulful, appealing eyes, raven hair, long white hands, and a low caressing voice. His name was Wiggins, Abijah Wiggins. For more years than it is polite to remind me of, I had not thought of him until I spent several days in a little out-of-the-way Eskimo village last summer. Neither it nor its inhabitants recalled Abijah because they were in the least soulful or romantic, but because, being so very primitive, so strangely foreign, it seemed the name of the queer little hamlet should sneeze with k-x-y-z's, instead of which it was Stebbins, just plain Stebbins. And the utmost of my inquiry failed to elicit who had been thus immortalized.

Stebbins cuddles down behind a rosy sandstone rock, to be sheltered from the piercing winds which blow across Norton Sound, and ambles down to a little sheltered cove quite off the line of travel, indicated by Point Romanoff there in the distance. It is fifteen miles across the island to St. Michael, over peat into which one sinks in many places to his knees. The Stebbinsites despise innovations, and "far from the madding crowd pursue the even tenor of their way." The very idea of one of those Eskimo women, in her dirty trousers and parka and seal boots, mingling in a madding crowd, is irresistibly funny. As a beauty at a matinee, a small luncheon, or a brilliant reception,



she would be a lamentable failure, but in her native environment she admirably lives "the life whereunto it hath pleased God to call" her, being in so far more of a success than most of us.

I didn't see an idle person in Stebbins, perhaps because it was late in the summer and so much remained to do before the long winter's rest began. From one end of the tiny settlement to the other, miles of seal and walrus thong stretched in the sun. They cut it as a harness-maker does, round and round, from a large stout skin, using wedge-shaped knives sharp enough to shave thin paper with. They make the knives from bits of saws set into handles of the omnipresent ivory. Iron is not found in Alaska, and is greatly prized by the natives, who treasure every scrap of it or of steel that they find. This thong is their rope, rivets and tackle. They make seines of it, in which they can catch anything from an idea to a humped-backed whale. It is simply marvelous the number of uses to which an Eskimo puts seals, which must have been invented for their especial benefit—of course, I mean hair seals; everyone knows that the fur seal was created for the beautifying of lovely women and to gain them the envy of others less fortunate. Seal hide is the covering for their kiaks, the stomachs are tied at one end and cocked for bags in which to keep the oil for winter eating; the intestines make windows and raincoats, the entire hide is used as a trunk, or, simply tied up like the ancient water bottles of the Orient, is filled with oil as we use barrels; and the scraped skin is made into mukluks, waterproof boots, which not only serve as foot-gear but are eaten, under stress of imminent starvation; the flesh, salted down like pork, is very much prized by them, though, I, never having approximated a meal



of seal boots, do not even relish seal flesh. When the skins are intended for making kiaks, they are scraped and soaked in oil until they swell and are soft, resembling tripe, only smooth. I have stood by the hour watching the women sewing these together. They lay the greasy skins upon the ground, and place heavy stones at the end from which they are sewing. They seat themselves flat upon the hide, and sew towards them, making a double seam, and using a slip back stitch. They work rapidly and neatly. Until recently, Eskimos used needles of pierced fish bones, but now they have the same kind which Queen Victoria plies; they still keep them, though, in bone tubes, stopped at the ends with wood and prettily carved. For thread they use sinew in sewing their skins. This, too, was softened by being dipped into wooden bowls of oil, one of which each woman had beside her. The childhood of a race is like that of an individual. Little ones do not like to be alone and work more happily in company, so with these primitive people. All the women sat together energetically sewing their sealskins while all the children played near by and the babies lay or sat upon the hides. They never bother as "civilized" children do. I hardly heard even a whimper from one all the while I was in Alaska, and the parents are almost invariably kind to their children. I never saw either Eskimo or Indian child whine and keep a mother from her work. These tots sat solemnly in the grease and dirt, having no dainty clothes to soil, nor fair complexion to spoil—sat contentedly for hours. One of the children was of the size of my own little daughter. I stood them together, but not touching, it is needless to remark, and photographed them against the background of that odd sewing bee. I could have cried over the blur which was



the only result, but upon the sensitive plate of memory its lines are sharp and distinct, and printed in colors too. Serene was sweet and dainty, in a simple blue gown the color of her eyes, her long sunny curls fell about a face fair as a lily, and her baby hands held a lady doll. The other little girl was attired in the shapeless Eskimo costume affected, with hardly a variation, by man, woman and child. If ever she had shrunk from soap and water, I'll swear it was not that morning, and her clothes were stiff with grease and dirt of no recent acquisition. Her coarse black hair hung in two tails, through her ears were loops of something like straw—some herb perhaps; from her nose hung a blue glass bead on a black thread, and in her hand she carried this beautiful doll. Serene gazed at the child with absorbing interest, and said wonderingly, "Mow-y, why tild dot berry in she nose? Funny doll baby, too." Yes, her doll was as great a contrast to the French beauty as the little Alaskan to the small American. It was made of ivory, with legs tied in a groove at the bottom, and a parka slipped over. How I did want that doll, but the little thing wouldn't hear of it, and when she feared I should get it ran and hid her beloved, like a second Moses, from the foreigner. It is to the credit of her parents that they refused money for the doll, and it was only after the little thing herself consented, after two days' negotiations, that I obtained the coveted beauty. The child could not withstand the combined treasure of candy, several doll's dishes, a ball, and a parasol about the size of a pail top. Evidently no such thing had ever before been seen in Stebbins, and little Miss Eskimo, parading up and down the beach with that white parasol over her head, was a most ludicrous sight. Her yellowish face had a faint pink in the cheeks—I saw several Eskimo with



that—and she had a decidedly Japanese cast of countenance. By the way, last year there was found at Cape Prince of Wales a very ancient suit of mail made of bits of iron lashed together with thongs almost identical with the earliest examples of Japanese armor. It is another of the many indications that the Eskimo are offshoots of that nation.

I was more than contented with my curious doll until I was presented with the finest specimen I have seen among the Eskimo.

It is made of a beautiful piece of ivory from the tusk of a mammoth, an animal which is said to have become extinct in Alaska at least 150,000 years ago. It is of a rich yellow tint, for Father Time takes as much pains coloring that as any smoker does his meerschaum, and it has a polish which only ancient lineage gives, for this doll has been handed down from generation to generation for much longer than the Eskimo have any word for. It was greatly prized by them, and the one who gave it to me has been four years trying to persuade them to part with the heirloom. Dr. Sheldon Jackson told me it is the finest specimen he has ever seen, and that any time my generosity was equal to the strain, he would be pleased to accept it on behalf of the museum at Sitka. It is only fair to save you the trouble of searching for its number in the catalogue, however, by telling you that, although I feel that it rightfully belongs there, I feel certain that my generosity is not to be counted upon to that extent. The ivory is the best preserved I have seen from that great hairy elephant, which, ages ago, roamed the frozen North. The doll itself is seven inches long. Its face, I am obliged to confess, is not lovely either in feature or expression, and its torso is indifferent, but we cannot all be beautiful. It certainly does not look given



over to the pomps and vanities of this sinful world. The groove shows where legs could be attached, but this was a case of beauty unadorned. It has been suggested that it and similar images are, or were, gods. This is errant nonsense. The Eskimo have almost no religious beliefs, and gods do not enter into them, only the grossest superstition.

In Stebbins—how that inappropriate name jars upon me—I saw kiak frames, too, notched, laden with stones to bend them aright, waiting for the covers which the women so industriously sewed upon. When stretched over the frames the skins contract about the sinew as they dry until the seams are as if welded together. When intended for the long sea voyages in which the Eskimo are so daring, boats are covered with walrus hide, which is thicker and stouter than seal skin. These are laced with thongs in the same way. “Umniaks,” as these boats are called, sometimes hold sixty persons. They boldly cross back and forth to Siberia, smuggling in the products of Alaska and returning with whale blubber, walrus skin and ivory, and reindeer skins. The Eskimo dare a sea that large boats would fear, which is hardly to be wondered at when you remember that they are said to have crossed the Bering straits seated on sealskins paddled with their own hands, “like little wanton boys that swim on bladders.”

I went into several of their caches here, and found the same treasures, coils of thongs, skins, furs, and walrus tusks. From these latter they carve everything. When the bitter cold of winter comes they amuse themselves by carving, and sometimes do remarkable work. They ornament everything that they use and some things that they don't. Here is the jaw of a Beluga whale with a sketch of reindeer browsing upon mountains. The hills



are adroitly adapted to the varying curves of the bone, and the animals are drawn with real spirit. The picture is made by scratching with a sharp instrument, perhaps with a file, and then rubbing in ashes from their black tobacco. I have many specimens of really beautiful work done by the Eskimo in this way. Here is a section of walrus tusk hollowed out for a napkin ring. It is covered with wild geese in various attitudes, drawn with singular fidelity to nature, and would not discredit an artist of some pretensions. Eskimo eat chunks of rancid grease as we do chocolates, so that a little ivory box I have might be termed a bonbonnière. It has a wooden bottom neatly fitted in, and the cover pulls out by the ever-useful seal thong. This box was a slice cut from the walrus tusk higher up. It is covered with these etchings, as such primitive engravings are carelessly called. Some of the animals are real, some are mythical. If one were to write a chapter on the snakes of Alaska, he might change but one word in the well-known treatise upon reptiles in the Emerald Isle, "There are no snakes in Ireland." Yet, although no Eskimo has seen a snake and seems to possess no myths relative to it, reptiles are often carved and pictured by them. Is that not strangely suggestive? Even to them, "That running brook of horror on the ground," as Ruskin so graphically puts it, "is a divine hieroglyph of the demoniac power of the earth, of the entire earthly nature."

Carving among the Eskimo is done by everybody, but some do really wonderful work. W. A. Kjellman has a specimen that was executed by a Port Clarence native to while away the long winter hours. It is a box-like affair about two feet long representing a "kajim," with a dozen or more puppets dancing to the beating of the tomtoms in the hands of other sitting





FEATHER PARKA, HUNTING HELMET, SPEAR, DANCING MASQUE AND KNUCKLES, IVORY DOLL, ETC.







figures. The dolls, not more than three inches high, are carved in ivory and carefully dressed in their ordinary fur costumes. The drums are perfect models, and to their rhythmic beat the dancers keep time with characteristic movements, when one cord is pulled. It is a marvelous bit of mechanism, and made with the simplest of tools. The Eskimo offered it to a white man at Port Clarence for a sack of flour, and was refused! Mr. Kjellman heard of it and secured the valuable carving for his home collection. In the North they often carve ivory into fine reliefs to hang upon their walls, and some of the old bits are genuinely artistic, for, as Ruskin says, "All good art is the natural utterance of its own people in its own day." Nothing escapes decoration. I have a fishhook, the ivory carved to represent a fish with bits of cloth for flippers and a nail for a hook. Eskimo are natural anglers; they could catch a game fish on a bent pin. I have a treasure box I secured at Stebbins, an old thing which I dug out of a tiny cabin. It has discs of ivory the size of silver dollars set into the wood and ornamented with concentric rings. The handle is of ivory, fastened by seal thongs, and a thong hooks over a tiny bit of ivory, carved like a head, to fasten the cover down. Walrus teeth are two inches or more long, and half as thick. The Eskimo carve them for countless things. Here is a "toggle" with which you can carry a heavy weight with comfort. A seal thong is put through the decorated tooth and twisted into the handle. The tooth is then held in the palm, the thong passing between the fingers.

Until recently the Eskimo have employed a bow drill to produce fire. With the advent of the white man, they seized upon the readier matches. Yet a fire can be lighted in less than a minute by one accus-



tomed to the fire set. It consists of four pieces: The wooden mouth-piece has a projection, which is firmly held between the teeth. In its bottom is a socket of stone in which rests the drill. This is also wood, having a bit of sharpened bone set in the end, which is placed in a hole in the "hearth," nothing but a small dry board kept for the purpose. The bow is a piece of ivory from the natural curve of the walrus tusk, and has a seal thong which is turned once about the drill and then twirled very rapidly with both hands, being steadied, as I explained, by the teeth. In less than a minute the friction of the bone point has produced a spark which is blown into tinder, and the gift of Prometheus has again descended. Holes are also drilled in stone by this device. The jar to the head and teeth must be worse than that produced by that wretched pedal drill at the dentist's, which sets every nerve in one's body a-quivering. But the Eskimo are not a nervous people, the very word in their connection is absurd, and they are immensely strong in their teeth. Some of them are able to draw nails from wood by fastening their teeth upon the heads. A bag containing fireset and tinder used to be a part of the necessary belongings of every Eskimo, but now they are comparatively rare. My bow is a fine old specimen traced with rude pictures of a ship and rowboat filled with men hunting walrus and native boats on one side, on the other a barabbara, fishrack and reindeer. I have also walrus teeth carved to represent whales, seal, walrus, etc. One is a double-faced, mythical animal which doubtless has to them some such meaning as attached to Janus. These carvings are not charms, as among the Indians of Southeastern Alaska, but simply exhibitions of their liking for decoration. An Eskimo, like a Yankee boy, loves to whittle.



Stebbins homes (!) follow the beach, of course. Eskimo are surely amphibious; not long ago their feet must have been webbed. Back of this pocket borough, deep in the rank grass, are some old graves almost obliterated by weight of snow and beat of rain. Upon one was the weather-worn vertebra of a white whale, the last killed, doubtless, by the deceased. "This, boy grave," said the young Eskimo who more than once escorted me about to explain things, "see bow and arrow over? Girl have woman paddle over." Age is shown by paddles of different shapes. Eskimo women are treated well, by the way, yet girl babies are undesired, and are often put to death at birth. Although a kindly, goodnatured people, smiling and happy, they still adhere to cruelties which seem eradicable; this is particularly true where living is hard. Way down in the valley of the Kuskokwin is a little Moravian mission called Bethel. The missionary, Mr. Kilbuck, is a well-educated, full-blooded Indian, and his wife is an accomplished white woman. They are doing a really wonderful work in civilizing the Eskimo in all that isolated region. In Mrs. Kilbuck's diary are many things that will be valuable in a time not far in the future when the tale of this people will have been told. She says, writing in the early days of the mission:

"A few days ago we were shocked by the news of a very heathenish and cruel attempt to kill a little child, a sickly boy about two years old. He was taken away from the village and tied down at the water's edge at low tide, without any clothes on. A passer-by heard his cry, and found the child with the water nearly to its neck. It was taken to the post and cared for. The child's mother is dead, and the father had left it in the care of an old woman of Mumtreckhlagamute, who most likely did the deed, as she was on her way to winter in her village. The only thing that surprised



the natives was the fact that it was a boy. They often kill their little girl babies."

A little later Mrs. Kilbuck writes:

"An old woman at the post, who stayed with us for a while when we first came, is dead. The natives accused her of killing two children by witchery, for which they clubbed her to death, severed all her joints, and burned her with oil, as is their custom of treating such persons. Superstition has a strong hold here, and is one of our greatest hindrances. An old woman, insane and hard to care for, was brought down the river, and when strangers refused to keep her, her nephew took her back and deliberately froze her to death."

Like most barbarians, the Eskimo regard insanity as the work of devils and the victim as accursed. In 1890, the native helper at this mission, because of temporary insanity, was clubbed to death. The people often suffer greatly and even die of starvation. Mrs. Kilbuck speaks of the continued wet weather's preventing the curing of fish for winter, so that before Christmas the natives were short of food, and before spring ate dogs that had been dead for weeks. The school had to be closed because they had not food enough to feed the children, who went back into the mountains to trap what game could be found. It is such practical and yet devoted women as Mrs. Kilbuck who uplift the name of missionary, which in some places in Alaska is, I grieve to say, synonymous with dreamer or schemer.

Eskimo chiefs have no real authority. It is the Shamans, medicine men, who are influential among the primitive natives. When Mr. Kilbuck was once delayed in the mountains on a trip to Bristol Bay, and was supposed by all to be dead, the old Shaman, *shaman* should be the name, boasted that he had produced the bad weather in order to kill the missionary. The



Shaman's power seems chiefly devilry, voodooing, as an old negro would term it. To make one more reference to Mrs. Kilbuck's diary, she quotes from a well-known hymn, "I am so glad that Jesus Loves me," which they have translated, and which all the Eskimo there were singing. I think one verse will be sufficient, especially as the language is exhausting to x's:

"Ang-nex-twa xa At-ta-vut whong-u-ta  
 Kah-nax-jah-xah-nick Xok tochi-ki-xa-kut  
 To chal-li-lou kah-nax-jah-xang-x-li-ni  
 Whing-a Xok kimn-kang-a Jesus Christus."

Speaking of missionaries reminds me of a curious paper that was given me in Alaska. Its heading is:

#### THE ESKIMO BULLETIN.

The Only Yearly in the World.

Cape Prince of Wales, Alaska, July, 1897.

It Is a Very Interesting Number and a Credit to—

W. T. Lopp, Editor and Publisher.

Oo-ten-na, Engraver.

It is fully worth the "one dollar a year," and I should think a good many people would buy the annual copy not only for its interesting contents, but to keep as a curiosity. A "*Special Dog-Sled Dispatch*," dated Golovin Bay, March 25, announces, "Bryan is President, and U. S. is at war with Spain. This news comes from the Yukon." Like many another "special," this is quite true barring a particular or two. Like larger newspapers, the "special" is denied, but in the same issue, stating that it was a mistake arising "from a practical joke played on a Yukon steamer." So much for politics. The "leader" is a murder, with headlines announcing—



## CHIEF KOKITUK'S DEATH.

Shot and Stabbed by Two Brothers.  
His Brother is His Avenger.

The whole account is interesting as betraying how close a resemblance Cains of all countries bear to one another. It ends: "Kokituk's only brother, Otsbaok, inherited most of his property. It consists of a frame house, oomeaks, dogs, sleds, thong, ivory, marten, beaver, fox, wolf, walrus, land otter and deer skins. He is a bright young man, about twenty years old, and, unlike all his people, temperate. Although custom appointed him to avenge his brother's death, he seemed loath to fight and would have gone to the Reindeer Station for a few months but for his father, chief Eliquek, who demanded he should stay here and do his duty."

The first page also contains a very creditable cut "by our Eskimo engraver" of the monument sent by friends of the missionary who was murdered there by drunken Eskimo four years ago, Harrison R. Thornton. Mr. Thornton was one of but two missionaries who have been killed in all Alaska. The shaft bears the testimony, "A good soldier of Christ," and on the other side, "Erected by Friends in Southport, Conn." The paper announces that this monument on that lonely hillside facing Bering Strait "is the most Western, if not the most Northern marble grave-stone on this continent."

In every newspaper, in close juxtaposition to the accounts of such tragedies, may usually be found their reason to be. *The Eskimo Bulletin* is no exception, as another article on the first page, which so interestingly describes the Eskimo manufacture of spirits, proves:



## DISTILLING A "HOME INDUSTRY."

400 GALLONS OF MOLASSES MADE INTO RUM.

The oldest inhabitants say that, in the history of the Keng-its-meets, the winter of '96-'97 has never been paralleled for drunkenness, disorder and bloodshed. Liquor has been distilled in almost every house. Some have manufactured it for trade, and others for "family use." Those who had no outfits borrowed their neighbors." Protracted drunken brawls often prevented many from taking advantage of favorable conditions of ice and wind for seal and bear hunting. At times, many were on the verge of starvation.

A five-gallon oil can, attached at the top to the end of an old gun-barrel which passes almost horizontally through a barrel filled with snow or ice water, constitutes the still. A fermented mixture of molasses or sugar and flour, when placed in the oil can and heated sufficiently to cause the alcohol to pass off through the gun-barrel worm, produces a kind of rum, which judging from the effects, seems to have all the desired properties of the imported article. A bottle full of the "Moonshine," "Aurora Borealis," or "Midnight-sun" brand, can be readily exchanged for a red fox skin. More than four hundred gallons of cheap black molasses and a quantity of sugar and flour have been used for the purpose.

I am always amused with the paragraphic news of country newspapers, but it is extremely interesting to read in *The Eskimo Bulletin*:

## LOCALS,

An August mail from the States, via St. Michael, arrived in December.

Ne-akpuk caught eleven seals in one night, with nets placed under the ice.

May and June proved good months for walrusing. About 300 were killed,



A small building boom struck our town last summer. Three new buildings (above ground) were erected.

Capt. Newth towed a whale ashore for the Diomedes natives.

Why have so many whales and walrus been captured in Bering Strait this spring? Has the influence of the new administration reached the Arctic?

Through the kindness of Capt. Tuttle, we received a part of the mail and a big Christmas box from Dr. Storrs' "boys" at the early date of June 25.

A novel feature of the Sunday School was a collection box. Bits of lead, powder, caps, primers, cartridges, spoons, matches, squirrel and ermine skins were contributed every Sunday. This collection will be used to build a small mission house in a neighboring village. (One of old said, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I unto thee.")

The people were surprised that no calamity fell upon the Christian natives who refused to observe the superstitious customs after netting white whales.

Through the liberality of Mr. W. T. Hatch, one of the substantial supporters of the Boys' Miss'y Society of Dr. Storrs' church, we are able to print Vol. III of the *Bulletin* in regular typographical style. The press has been used to print original lessons for the school.

The little children were delighted with the kindergarten in May. (Think of an Eskimo kindergarten. Froebel would enjoy visiting that, if indeed he has not already done so, for surely spirits must enjoy their immunity from time and space.)

In this up-to-date little newspaper there are even two advertisements:

*"In-ne, with hall, kitchen, living room and elevated cache for sale. Madl-ik,"* which sounds like a joke, and *"Heads and skulls of walrus for sale by Ne-tax-ite."*

Both of these are rudely illustrated.

The paths of literature are alluring, and we have strayed adown them far from Stebbins. Let us return and walk through the rank grass behind the little dwellings to the Kajim. A Kajim is the village club



house, so to speak. In summer it is little used, but in winter a large fire is kept burning in the center, and the men there do their carving and the women whatever passes for Eskimo fancy work about the cheery blaze, for, the coasts being generally bare of fuel along this part of Alaska, even in the bitterest weather individual families seldom have fires. At the Kajim, the news of the day is passed—goodness only knows what it is—and gossip is rife, as among all ignorant people. The Eskimo also spin long yarns, themselves the heroes, telling of their prowess and achievements, and repeat the olden myths of their tribes while smoke one, smoke all. The Kajims are built much alike, varying chiefly in age and accumulation of dirt and vermin. A passage about twenty feet long brings one to the door in summer, but in winter you must drop into a hole in this passage and crawl on hands and knees through a tunnel, emerging on the inside. I crawled with difficulty into the aperture, and found myself in a room about twenty feet square, lighted dimly by one small opening at the top, covered with seal intestine. A large log extended the length of every side built against the wall about the height of a table. These logs were really very rich in color, being blackened by age and smoke and dirt till they resembled ancient mahogany, with a polish acquired from daily contact with greasy fur or naked flesh. There were a couple of tree crotches cut so that they stood firm, holding frying pans of oil, not pleasant olive oil, but malodorous seal, in which were strips of drill for wicks. In the center of the room was a large deep square in which a great fire is kept in winter, and around it was a boarded place for the ceremonious dances. Two other troughs stood about, which in winter are filled with snow, and numerous wooden dishes upon the bench



are used for the same, for it is a curious habit of the Eskimo to take an almost nightly "sweat bath" in winter. Every crevice is carefully closed, and a roaring fire made. The smoke, unable to find vent, hangs in clouds, till the atmosphere could be served in slices. The men, stark naked, lie upon the logs and breathe through mouth-pieces. They are made of a sort of hay, with a stick at the back, which is held between the teeth. Three minutes is the limit a white man can bear of this terrific heat, smoke, and stench, yet Eskimo will endure it for an hour at a time by frequently rubbing themselves down with snow. Once in a while one of the natives refreshes himself by rushing out, naked and perspiring, into the clear Arctic air, rolling in the snow at a temperature far below zero, and returns to the Kajim for another season of enjoyment. It is seldom that a foreigner is allowed to mingle with the native pleasures, but a young fellow from one of the companies, having killed a seal, proved himself a good shot at fowl and clever with fish-line, was finally given that privilege, perhaps the more readily because he much resembled an Indian. He had determined to make an impression and took with him to the Kajim a brightly colored circus poster showing the animals. He told them that he had been in a tent which would hold not only all the Stebbinsites, but all their houses, with room to spare. Then he showed them the strange and dreadful animals and described them. Their wonder and awe grew at every word. He found that he was decidedly the hero of the hour, and, waxing animated, described the wonderful tumbling and the three-fold somersaults performed by the acrobats, whose pictures in bespangled tights he showed them to prove his marvelous words. Now, the Eskimo are pretty



agile themselves, and as they lie boasting upon their bench one will spring up and demonstrate some trick or tumble for the admiration of the others. When, therefore, he described the somersault in air, one of the Eskimo demanded to be taught it then and there. That he couldn't do, of course, but to recover lost ground he told the interested natives that he had traveled in a long house which had an engine that said chu-chu, and that they went on dry land over mountain and tundra, so fast that they could have gone from Stebbins to Dawson in two days. "All same like goose," broke in one of his spell-bound audience.

Speaking of their agility, Eskimo belie their slow and clumsy appearance. The officers of the *Bear* often amuse themselves by placing some desired thing high and telling the Eskimo it is for the one who kicks it off. They will spring up, strike it with both feet and recover themselves instantly, alighting upon their feet.

The Eskimo attend strictly to business during the summer, and go visiting all winter. Their peculiar dances are held in January and February. St. Michael, for instance, entertained last year. Some of the guests came three hundred miles to the festivities. As they gather, they camp just without the city gates, so to speak, though none of them ever saw a gate, and wait till all are assembled. Then officials corresponding to our mayor and chief of police, go out to meet them on behalf of the entertaining village, certain ceremonies are performed, and the visitors are given the freedom of the city. They tender their arms and weapons of every kind to two men, not only as a sign of peaceful invasion but because in subsequent festivities it is safer to all concerned to be provided with nothing that will "go off." These weapons are under



guard of two natives who are responsible for them and who would shoot without question any one who tampered with them. As the guests arrive, the people run out and beg them "Come to my house." In fact, both Eskimo and Indians in Alaska are hospitable to the degree commanded in the Bible they have not read. Though the likelihood of entertaining angels unawares is reduced to the minimum in Alaska, if a sled is heard at any time, the natives will rush out to be first to invite the stranger in, and will readily share with him what little food they have. Indeed, the Eskimo possess several virtues which shame us who assume to be civilized because our thin veneer shows so high a polish, a polish so superficial, however, that but slight friction wears it off. Let me tell you something which touched me. At Point Barrow, the land farthest north on this continent, and farthest removed, too, it would seem, from the influences of our motto, "Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost," the manufacture of their curious stone stoves is a work of time. When a young man approaches marriageable age he selects a large boulder, in size and shape approximating what he wishes, and begins to chip it out in the time-honored fashion, working with a sharpened stone. There is a steep rough trail, much traveled by the natives, who rest at a certain point. At this place he lays his incipient lamp-stove. Every Eskimo who thereafter passes that way takes up the stone and hacks away at it while he rests from his climb, leaving it for the next. As it nears completion the utmost pains is taken with it, and when quite finished the young man takes his property and his wife at the same time. Any Eskimo who refused to work at the stone would be considered below contempt, and no one ever heard of the lamp being stolen. "It might not



even be known whose it was," I said. "True, but every one but the owner would know it was not his." Imagine so simple and beautiful a deed in our enlightened state and States.

These lamp-stoves are both curious and ingenious, of ancient use as well. They are crescent-shaped, from a foot across to three, I should think. This is a top view. The stone is hollowed out between the lines, and filled with seal oil, in which reindeer moss serves as wick. When lighted, the flame is unbroken over all the top, the typical new moon of the Esquimo honeymoon. This is their light and heat. American honeymoons are lazier.



## CHAPTER V

### THE POTLATCH

This is the most widespread custom in Alaska. Eskimo, Aleuts and Indians of the various tribes, all while away the long dreary winter with song and dance, eating and drinking. In Southeastern Alaska, the Potlatch is usually given by an individual who wishes to acquire distinction, to become a social leader, and the gifts are from him, just as Mrs. Vanderbilt gives a German and provides costly favors for her guests. In neither case does it argue generosity or kindly feeling toward the recipients, only self-glorification and a childish delight in the show of wealth. Among the Eskimo of the western coast, however, a Potlatch is more like a donation party.

I have mentioned a young man who ingratiated himself with the Stebbinsites, having impressed them at the Kajim as being a very important personage. Alex, one of the pilots aboard the *Healy*, where he was pilot, espoused his cause and obtained for him the very unusual privilege of being present at a Potlatch given to the neighboring villages. To him I am indebted for the description of the decorations and proceedings of this one.

It was about seven o'clock in the evening, and a blizzard was raging with ever-increasing violence. Behind the bluff, snow had drifted to a depth of a hundred feet, and it was bitterly cold. A herald went to and fro among the little houses, which rounded up like



frosted dropcakes, for a Titan feast, and loudly proclaimed the event, bidding every one repair to the Kajim. "On with the dance, let joy be unconfined," or words to that effect. Families and visiting relatives, some from a distance of fifty miles, then wended their way through the cutting blast to the dance-hall, which was but a step away for every one. The decorations were, if not beautiful, certainly unique. In the center of the room was a huge funnel, covered with the downy feathers of the wild goose, which were constantly in motion. Overhead, wires were stretched across the room, and upon them hung grotesque figures that appeared to be standing unsupported in the air, which might almost have been, so thick did the atmosphere become. Among these figures were hoot owls, with their wings attached to sinews jerked from time to time by small boys concealed under the benches, so that the owls appeared to fly. Some of these effigies were really horrible, more were ludicrous. The Eskimo show as much skill and invention in carving grotesques as those who cut the gargoyles for the old cathedrals of Europe.

At an Alaskan German, the Shaman, or Medicine Man, is the Ward McAllister, the Master of Ceremonies, and the Potlatch began with his appearance on all fours. He then crouched behind a huge mask three or four feet high, while he chanted in monotonous recitative the marvelous achievements of his ancestors, deeds only exceeded by his own, "big Injun me." His boasting recalls a cousin of mine who would be in his element at a Kajim. If any one has scored a great jump, he has cleared a greater; was any one suffering from la grippe, he had just recovered from a worse attack; if you told of a grand sight, he had witnessed a grander. Had my cousin been there, the Shaman



would not have had it all his own way. All the time he was boasting like the Toreador in Carmen, two or three men chanted. These Shamans really do some very wonderful things. One at Port Hope has become widely known among ships' crews by his performance of a trick no one has yet fathomed. The officers of the *Bear* once wagered upon his success, and the Shaman was brought aboard. Drums and chanting prepared the proper conditions, and then the crew tied the Shaman hand and foot by ropes knotted as only sailors can knot. A Parka was drawn over the whole, and officers of the crew watched closely. No one knows how it was done, but all attest that it was. The man cast the net work from him as a spider web, and stood free. On Stony Creek, another Shaman does the same trick and allows you to throw him, tied like a bundle, into the water. It is but a moment before he is swimming a-shore. The medicine man's legerdemain is practiced for weeks in a deep forest, where none may see. Often he needs a helper, in which case he takes with him a confederate apprentice. But sometimes the wonderful things they accomplish cannot be explained. Last winter, a Potlatch lasting weeks was held at St. Michael, to which guests came from three hundred miles away. Each village had brought its Shaman, who not only boasted what he had done, but actually demonstrated that he could perform wonders, while the Eskimo grunted approval, and then put forward another to out-do him. It was at this time that one of them was hanged by the neck with a sinew, and kept suspended fully ten minutes. When cut down, his head fell over limply, his limbs dangled lifelessly, he appeared to be dead. In a few minutes he revived, and after a short time was as lively as a cricket. The American who told me of it had no explanation to offer. He simply



said he had seen it, and so had others. He himself had carefully examined the man as he hung, and swore there was no supporting harness, nor trick contrivance of any kind that he could discover. As for me, I tell it as I heard it, but so many reliable people assert the truth of these things that they appear indisputable. One funny thing happened at St. Michael's Potlatch; a Shaman having boasted that he was bullet proof, was about to demonstrate it by a confederate, when a white man crept in and sped a bullet straight through the Shaman's hand, whereat, in pain and discomfiture, he retired, followed by the jeers of the Eskimo.

But to return to Stebbins. After the medicine man had finished the recitals of his own virtues and prowess, he retired to a corner, and presided over the festivities. Several men beat upon tomtoms, and struck the floors with sticks. This was the officer which inspired the mazy whirl.

When did dancing begin? Methinks in the world's babyhood, "when the morning stars sang together," and to their music the mountain rills danced merrily along to meet in the quiet river their fate; when to the warble of birds, the forest boughs, all in Lincoln green, like so many Robin Hoods and Irish Katys, bowed and swung "forward and back"; when bees and all manner of insects cheerily tuned their orchestra that the flowers might sway in the stately minuet led by milord the breeze, light of foot as he clasps the queenly rose, swings the pale lily, or returns the shy violet's bow, but cruelly slights the wall-flower, setting a bad example to society leaders ever since; when the careless butterflies flitted about in the arms of the sunbeams, just as many a butterfly since has danced with what she thought true gold because it glittered; when even Earth herself, attired in her best gown of flowered



green and flashing with jewels, allowed the fierce Sea, in his navy blue, to encircle her ample waist, while they spun off into the great ballroom of the universe, dodging breathless, hoydenish little Mercury and the Comet sisters, who drag their trains about not caring whose way they are in, where all are taking their turn to the "music of the spheres," except Arcturus, the placid chaperon who sits watching the dancers and their satellites, especially Saturn, the flirt, Venus, the beauty, and Sirius, the brightest of them all.

Begin? Why, dancing began with the beginning. Minerva started the fashion among the immortals when she danced over the defeat of the Titans. Castor & Pollux was the firm name of the first dancing masters, who excelled in the Memphitic or war dance to the music of martial songs and the clang of swords against bucklers. The Spartans danced with hymns to Apollo, god of poetry, and Bacchus, god of dance. Their leaders were called Corypheans, just as the heads of the ballet are now. The Egyptians had their mysterious and complicated astronomical dance; the Romans their Archimimus, or chief mimic's dance, when a noble wearing the apparel and a portrait masque of a king would precede his hearse, solemnly dancing and acting the deeds of the heroic dead. Little girls bearing cypress boughs danced in the funeral processions of Athenian kings. David danced before the Ark and Miriam before the Children in the Wilderness.

Like other primitive peoples, the Alaskans have dances to express all phases of their narrow lives, the seasons, the mosquito pest, hunting, warfare, ancient cannibalism, endurance of pain, and more. Some of these pantomimic dances are wonderful, for aboriginals are, like children, natural actors. But this night



the dancing was the pristine movement simply, slow, monotonous turning and swaying. If you have never seen it, you have only to ask your toddling baby to "dance for mother," and raising his tiny hands he will show you the exact step, crooning to himself for the rhythm. My little child even holds her hands palms forward as most barbarians do. As the Alaskans dance, the tomtoms are struck to emphasize the movements. These instruments are curious, and by no means unmusical. They are really shallow drums, covered on one side only, and about the size of base drums, with handles. The skin is the intestine of the ever-useful seal, and is affected by the slightest dampness. The one I obtained at Stebbins is an old one, yet it serves me almost as well as a registered barometer.

After the Shaman had retired to a corner, the men of the tribe danced, at first singly and in the order of their importance, which was evidently prearranged and undisputed, while their wives and mothers whirled round and round at the sides like satellites to the star performer, and the Shaman loudly recited his deeds and virtues to the accompaniment of the tomtom players' weird, droning chant. Terpsichore was goddess both of dance and choral music, yet I think the white-robed Grecian Muse would have felt herself out of her element presiding over her Eskimo devotees at this Alaskan potlatch. Each man who danced wore a mask tied over his face, a mask which, to the tribe, identifies him with his family and forefathers. This mask is like a coat-of-arms, and every part of it has some meaning to the initiated, though it may appear supremely ridiculous to outsiders. Every family has one, which is never deviated from in the least from generation to generation. It is usually whittled from wood, and is



fantastically painted. A new one is made for every annual Potlatch. As each man finished his dance, he removed his mask and handed it to the Shaman, who looked intently at it, making "passes" over it as if to exorcise any evil spirits which might linger there. Then he placed the mask upon the heap in the corner. Some of them were very curious; one had a tongue a yard long hanging from its grinning mouth. This tongue was made of seal intestine, colored red, and being hollow could be blown out like a child's toy. As the man danced he projected this horrible thing at intervals. I suppose that it meant that his ancestor in ancient times was glib of tongue, garrulous, if not wise. This mask came from the Stebbins potlatch, though against the wishes and advice of the Shaman. He warned that unless every mask were burned at the end of the festivities, as is their custom, there would be great scarcity of seals. But "Alex," the Eskimo pilot, insisted, having small belief in their tribal superstitions, and no respect whatever for the Shaman, and as he was the principal contributor to the coming feast, Alex had his way, and we took three masks. As it happened, the following seal catch was the largest they had known for years. It is these things which are undermining the Shamans everywhere the white man goes. My mask is not so elaborate. The forehead is white, one side of the face red, the other blue. A sort of lizard lies across the top. This interesting reptile is shaped like a barber-pole, has a black head with many teeth, and eight or ten legs. The ridge over the eyes of the mask is continued in the long graceful nose which curves to the left. The mouth is generous, and in shape that of the crescent moon, with points turning upwards. It is provided with as many long white pegs as could be crowded into the space, and a red tongue



hangs out from between them. One oblique eye is watching the other, which is round, and from which, representing a hole in the ice, a seal head is emerging. I don't claim for my mask beauty that would appeal to the masses, but, as people say of a great heiress whose face it would be obvious irony to call pretty, there is a good deal in it.

Both the men and women dancers held upon their fingers what I call "dancing knuckles," for lack of the proper name. These are of wood, brightly colored and oddly decorated. Here are two pairs. One has the spines of long feathers thrust into holes. At the ends bunches of down are tied, perhaps to signify that the owner's heart and feet are light. The other pair has a fringe of caribou whiskers, feeling and looking like fibers of weather-beaten rope. You will notice, what is always the case, that each pair has a merry face and a sad one, "from lively to severe." They seem to signify the twin children of Life, Grief being the first-born, the stronger and larger; Joy the weakling who dies in youth. They represent the universal tragedy and comedy which the overlapping masks in our theaters signify.

The dancing continued some time. The men now came out in twos and threes, as their rank declined. All but one the Shaman's voice extolled, but him he mercilessly ridiculed before all his tribe. Finally, all the young men who had not distinguished themselves by killing seals came out and danced in one party, but the young girls were not allowed to appear. Killing a seal is the shibboleth, so to speak, among the Eskimo. They wear, by the way, when hunting, a very curious helmet made of light wood, trimmed at the back with a large number of the long narrow feathers of the sea parrot thrust into holes in an ivory ring on



the back of the bonnet. It is a most ludicrous affair, but serves two purposes, shielding the face from the glare of the snow, and bringing luck to the huntsman.

They use in walrus hunting a spear, the end of which is cut from a walrus tusk, engraved with scenes from the slaughter.

Children were bestowed under the benches to economize space. In the elegant language of our young friend, "You could have knocked off their eyes with a club," as they watched the proceedings. Some of them had masks, and every now and then one of these would poke out his head and boast what he would do when he grew to be a man—just you wait till he showed you.

O, little Eskimo, you of the yellow face and sparkling eyes, we have also boasted in our youth. We intended to be wise and powerful, to think noble thoughts and express them in world-thrilling deeds, but we have ignominiously failed, not only to do, but to be. Even the fire of our enthusiasm has died out, and we sit by the ashes of our hopes shivering as we hear the blasts shriek by our lonely hearts, for the winter of life has come, and darkness has fallen. We are too cold, it is too late, for the beautiful things we meant to do.

All wore their finest furs, were newly greased and painted, sported their most ancient labrets and any finery obtained during the year. One woman had a rarely beautiful necklace, which hung to her waist, catching the light and the others' envy. It was a yard of the tinsel which glistens upon Christmas trees. Another wore a unique belt, and as metal girdles of cunning workmanship are now so much admired, I mention this, thinking it might contain a valuable suggestion. It was formed entirely of the keys of sardine boxes, with



the tin hanging in the "cutest" spirals. The belle who wore this evidently lived near a mining town, and had gradually "picked them up," as a true connoisseur does his diamonds, here and there. But I fear this will savor of a society "write-up;" no more of clothes. Speaking of women, however, reminds me of Alex's wife, young and not bad looking. She had received rather more attention than she could bear in seemly Eskimo manner, and actually started to precede her husband in retiring behind a curtain. Alex has been much with the whites, and would perhaps overlook some things in his wife after witnessing the unbridled liberties taken by American women, but this affront, public, too, demanded severe measures. He pushed her roughly away, then suddenly turned and dragged the presuming woman behind the curtain, while a torrent of x's, which were evidently Eskimo for d's, flowed from his lips. Mrs. Alex was very meek and mild all the rest of the evening. If her husband has so much to bear with her, it is well she is an only wife. Other leading Eskimo have two and three wives if they can afford the luxury.

When the dancing was ended, a grass mat curtain was drawn, discovering the men divided into two companies, one representing the Malemutes, the other the Yukon Indians, who proceeded to advocate the advantages each people possessed over the other. "You," shouted the "Indians," scornfully, "you no king salmon."

"Ha," sneered the "Eskimo," "you starve without tomcod and delicious seal oil."

"As if need were for more than moose!"

"Make you lufdacks and mukluks?"

"Your silly skin boats,—but you have no birchbark," in tones of insulting pity. So the companies continue



their taunts and ironical condolences till they can frame no more, when the Shaman decides that the poor silly Indians are indeed unfortunates and consequently deserving only contempt; that the Eskimo are the most, and indeed the only, favored people in the world, their country most inviting, their food richest, their men bravest, etc., etc.—it might be contending English or Frenchmen, except that nothing is said upon either side of the beauty and graces of their women.

The Shaman next, with appropriate passes and songs, talked up the down-covered funnel to the dead. There was something fine in their thought of those who had gone from them, as these "barbarians" paused in their pleasures to include the dead. At the time, however, only the ludicrous side showed. The huge funnel resembled an immense ear-trumpet, held to the deaf ears of the dead to convey the greeting of the quick. If they did not hear that, there is no reasonable doubt that they must have done the pandemonium which ensued. It began with an ear-splitting, long-drawn yell from the Shaman. Then, for fully half an hour, every man, woman and child, throwing back the head, made the loudest noise possible by the greatest effort of lungs and throat. One imitated the snort of the seal, another the shrill scream of the wild goose, another the solitary cry of the loon, another, most exactly, the splash of water as the terrified beaver sought refuge from the hunter, or the bark of the walrus. Some of the imitations were wonderfully exact. The pandemonium cannot be described, however. As near as I could make out, this is a general compliment and appeal to the spirits of these various animals and birds that they furnish them in numbers to the needy and appreciative earth-born who call upon them.



After this the time for the reconciliation of enemies arrived. The Shaman played peacemaker, the only respectable rôle I have known one to appear in. He drew two men together, clasped their unwilling hands, made passes over them and begged them to be brothers. At first they gripped each other and wrestled violently. When both were exhausted, they fell upon each other's breasts like Romeo and Juliet, retired to a corner, put their arms about each other and presented a rather ridiculous spectacle of brotherly love carried to extremes. Then there was more wrestling for honor. Stripped to the waist, they were a strange picture in a fantastic frame. The victor was fêted, the defeated fed with frozen berries. This was a notable departure from our time-honored practice of forgetting the vanquished quite. All is for the winner, as if winning itself were not honor enough.

Then all the guests sat about the Kajim, and the donations were piled in the center. Alex had furnished the largest amount, and naturally assumed command all same white man. There were wooden bowls filled with something that resembled cottage-cheese, flour,—Alex had donated the unheard-of gift of two sacks,—tea, sugar, leaf tobacco, drill, etc. Alex took of each, tendered some first to the Shaman, put others in a place apart for the general feast, and passed down the line dealing out what he considered fair to each one. It is to be noted that he stopped before the aged, the blind, the crippled, and dipped twice and thrice to cries of "good, good." One palsied man was served with especial generosity. Among the Southeastern Alaska natives, this kindness is not shown at a potlatch. It is conducted, as are the Four Hundred's social affairs, on the principle, "Them as 'as, gits."



After the division of the goods, all hands fell upon the feast remaining in the center, and gorged till it seemed their bodies could not contain such vast quantities of whale blubber, etc., as they stowed away. Among them it is an honored maxim to eat when there is food, against the day when there is none. This Potlatch was remarkable, too, in being without one case of drunkenness. Most of them end in most bestial intoxication and dreadful scenes. Having risen up to eat, they now sat down to play. The great American game of poker, with bits of lead for chips, was the favorite, though an Eskimo game of antiquity played something like checkers with pyramids, had its devotees. Contrary to custom, the Stebbinsites had brought their arms and now wagered them, as their most precious belongings, on the turn of a card. One went home that night enriched by three rifles and two axes, another much prized article. Like other barbarians, Eskimo or white, the Malemutes are eager gamblers, so while the men played on and on, the women gossiped as they gathered their share of the feast and carried it to their homes, returning afterward to pick up any little lump of grease that might have been overlooked, and to eat with relish the flour that had sifted down upon the filth and oil on the floor, licking it from their fingers with enjoyment which almost settled your stomach to the disgusting proceeding.

Finally, the fire smouldered, the last dainty had been eaten, the games lagged, the women yawned—you know it all. At three of the clock the Potlatch ended. It was not an elegant entertainment, the viands were not rich nor served in costly plate, the orchestra was poor, the dancing neither voluptuous nor graceful, the costumes were hideous and the manners primitive, but



recalling the dazzling scene of a swell cotillon the contrast was no greater in externals than in the spirit of the two social events, and in the latter sense, methinks, the Potlatch was more truly civilized than the German.



## CHAPTER VI

### KUTLIK, HUNTING AND FISHING

He who, from zone to zone,  
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,  
In the long way that I must tread alone,  
Will guide my steps aright.  
(To a Waterfowl by William Cullen Bryant.)

One need recall a song of faith upon the desolate tundras which stretch far and wide along the lower Yukon, in a lonely silence broken only by the shrill scream of the waterfowl. Since I have seen them, if any speak to me of the dullness and monotony of life, before my mind's eye stands a swarthy, brawny man who for forty years has never been out of Alaska, and whose home for three decades has been upon the edge of a slough in the midst of a tundra. To me it would have been the veritable "Slough of Despond," into which I should long ago have sunk to my very heart and brain. As we strove to talk together, it was not so much that he knew little English and I less Russian that we could not understand each other. It was rather because we were of different worlds. Said I, more to myself than to him, looking at the two or three lowly cabins facing the waste, "And this is home to you, you like this place?" His face brightened. "Oh, yes, he very nice place. Bird fly many, fish so long" (measuring the length with his great hands) "plenty of all; *very* nice place, stay always." The tundra was dreary and monotonous then, under a smiling sky. As he spoke, I pictured it amid the twilight of an Arctic winter, frozen and dead beneath its pall



of snow, the bitter wind sweeping across the barren, without even a tree to break its force nor to whisper a hope of returning warmth and light; nothing to see, nowhere to go, no books—I should go mad.

When Komkoff first came to these tundras as trader among the Eskimo, there were one thousand living just at hand, now there are but two. Although considerably past seventy years of age, he does not look more than fifty, and can travel afoot behind his dog-sled forty miles a day with ease. He brings all his goods from St. Michael, by land sixty miles distant, hauling them by dog-sled in winter to save freighting, and never spending more than a day and a half on the way, though this part of the country is noted for its terrific gales. His post is named Kootalik, or Kutlik, and is seventy-seven miles from St. Michael by way of Norton Sound and the Yukon delta, where the many mouths of the great river discharge one-third more water than does the Mississippi, and freshen the sea ten miles out. Yukon, as Mr. O'Gilvie was at pains to discover, is from Yukon-a, an Indian word which means "the big river." Mr. Bell, of the Hudson Bay Company, first applied it as a name in 1846. The Yukon rises in the British Columbia Rockies, 2,600 miles from the Bering Sea and not more than 125 miles from Juneau, being formed by the Lewis and the Pelly rivers. Its delta is 65 miles across, a series of sloughs, many of them almost dry, which divide from the main river 160 miles up.

Komkoff, his earrings giving an odd touch to his heavy face, is as much at home in a kiak as an Eskimo, and in a bog as a duck. He came to the *Healy* both walking and paddling, and, for all I know, swimming. He plodded along the tundra, pulling his boat after him, and lightly leaped into it when he



came to the water. One of our pilots met an old friend at Kootalik, and went ashore with him in a single kiak. Being the guest, "Alexis" entered the tippy skin skiff first and disposed of himself at full length in the bottom of one end, breathing through his hands, at least they were all that was visible. Then his friend entered the kiak, entirely filling the small opening in the middle, which is its only airhole, and rapidly paddled off. It must have been a most enjoyable ride for Alexis. Soon after, two more kiaks came up, a stick was laid across them, and another native seated himself securely upon it while they all chatted and laughed as they paddled away. These men had brought strings of duck, wild goose, and other game from the flats about us, to sell to the boat. I shall always have a real affection for that Healy cook—how he could serve game!

It has been said that good Americans when they die go to Paris. Good sportsmen might think themselves in an angler's, if not an angel's, paradise, were they to suddenly awaken upon these tundras at the delta of the Yukon, for seventy miles the breeding grounds of millions of wild fowl of every kind. Teal, green-winged, best of all ducks for the table, and blue-winged, mallard, blue-bill, pintail, red-head, golden-eyed, swan, loon, eider—are there any other members of the duck family? Be sure, they may be found with their brethren at the old homestead, "Shore Acres." When Alaska is permanently settled, and industries suited to its condition arise, eiders will probably be protected in preserves, as in Norway and Iceland, for their down. This the mother bird plucks from her breast to keep her eggs warm when she leaves the nest. It seems cruel twice to rob her both of down and eggs. But mother love is strong even in a bird. For



the third time she lays her nest full, but, having bared her own breast, the father-bird picks the inferior down from his, and the young are hatched. Each nest produces about half a pound of this costly "live" down a year, and eider eggs are a delicacy. The Alaskan natives, by the way, are the only ones this side the Atlantic who can dress eider skins. In the States they must be sent to Holland. I have a most beautiful parka made entirely of eider breasts. The smooth gray is bordered on each side by the short standing feathers, and the hood and bottom are fringed with fur to match. Swans are also found in the lower Yukon, and their skins are used by the Indians. I have a unique bed cover, made double, entirely of swan breasts. The native women tanned it by chewing the skin all over, then neatly pieced it, using fiber for thread. Swans, you remember, used to be served whole in their feathers at court banquets. In 1306, at the solemn feast which celebrated his son's knight-hood, King Edward vowed by the swan, which formed the chief dish, to pursue his policy. In England, even yet, wild swan are "birds-royal," and belong to the crown. The painting of the "Russian Wedding Feast" depicts the honored bird at table. Ptarmigan is Arctic grouse, speckled brown in summer, snow white in winter except for a black hair-line down the spine of each feather. Ptarmigan are timid, and are so protected by their color that a covey has been known to rise close by the sportsman who had not perceived them. They are much prized for the table. As for snipe, jack-snipe! A man who brings in a good bag of jack-snipe needs no other trumpeter. When startled, jack-snipe rise rapidly, changing their course and zigzagging through the air so that it is almost impossible to get a shot at one. As Josh Bil-



lings says, "The fust thing you see iz a whizz, and the last is a whirr." Jack-snipe are so delicious that they have been bred, but it takes a man all his time to feed the greedy things, while worms do not grow fast enough to appease their voracious appetites. A tame snipe has been known to eat twice his weight of worms in twelve hours! Alaska, by the way, is almost destitute of worms, not from the presence of jack-snipe, it may be unnecessary to mention, but because the ground freezes so deep. Speaking of worms reminds me of little Doris, who was punished one day last summer and who repaired to the garden. When she came in her mother said, "Well, dearie, are you sorry you were naughty?" "No," retorted Doris, "I'm not, but I got even with you; I've eaten three worms, two plain and one woolly" (a caterpillar).

Among the Yukon flats, cranes may be seen by dozens standing, long-legged and solemn upon the sandbars or dancing with side-splitting gravity. Their flesh is better than turkey, and their eggs, though larger than goose eggs, very delicate. A crane egg omelette is something for an epicure. Then there are golden plover, and curlews with their long bills and tails, loons whose breasts and down are used for feather caps and trimming; prairie chickens, which are especially plentiful on the Tanana river, wild geese without number, and a sort of bird new to me, with legs like a snipe's and tail like a pheasant's. The emperor goose, huge and beautiful, is found in the retired sloughs of the delta near Kutlik. He is sport, indeed. His flesh and feathers are strong enough of garlic to make one ill before he is cooked, but you should taste him afterward!

At breeding time it is foolish to waste ammunition. Fowl can be killed by dozens with a short club, and



taken away in boatloads. As for eggs, it is impossible to compute their numbers. Near St. Michael lies Egg Island, to which the Eskimo resort. At breeding time, it is literally covered with eggs. It is impossible to walk without trampling upon them.

Fowling for sport, causing the death of pretty innocents for fun, seems pure brutality to me.

Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?

Ah! surely nothing dies but something mourns.

But men could make a good living on the Yukon flats supplying both ocean and river steamers with game and eggs for winter sale.

There are very few singing birds in Alaska, it struck me. I heard scarcely a twitter all the time I was in the country. Perhaps even the birds feel the vastness and stillness and are silenced. A miner said to me, "I used to be always singing, whistling, laughing. Now I am startled if I hear any sound from my lips. I am growing taciturn, too. I think it's the effect of the country. I've noticed it in other men."

A little snow-bird sings, they say, though I didn't hear one, and I am told there are larks, though I saw none. I noticed some cliffs upon the Yukon that are honeycombed with martin holes, and there are robin-redbreasts and humming birds. I saw a bird strange to me, dark gray, with a high red pompadour on his head. The Arctic owl is large and gray, in winter pure white, and he makes night hideous with his silly wisdom. I'm old enough to know better, but owls seem uncanny to me. They look as if they possessed some weird secret which they knew you'd like to hear, but which they don't intend to tell you. When I was a child, we used to try to peer into the face of one we caught. It made me shivery. The owl would turn its head like lightning, apparently entirely around, as if it



were on a pivot. I used to dream of that mysterious bird; to me it was almost as dreadful as a ghost. Barry Cornwall must have felt as I did when he wrote of

### THE OWL.

In the hollow tree, in the old gray tower,  
The spectral owl doth dwell;  
Dull, hated, despised, in the sunshine hour,  
But at dusk he's abroad and well!  
Not a bird of the forest e'er mates with him;  
All mock him outright by day;  
But at night when the woods grow still and dim,  
The boldest will shrink away.  
O, when the night falls, and roosts the fowl,  
Then, then is the reign of the horned owl.

And the owl hath a bride, who is fond and bold,  
And loveth the wood's deep gloom;  
And with eyes like the shine of the moonstone cold,  
She awaiteth her ghastly groom;  
Not a feather she moves, not a carol she sings,  
As she waits in her tree so still;  
But when her heart heareth his flapping wings,  
She hoots out her welcome shrill!  
O, when the moon shines, and dogs do howl,  
Then, then is the joy of the horned owl!

Mourn not for the owl and his gloomy plight,  
The owl hath his share of good:  
If a prisoner he be in the broad daylight,  
He is lord of the dark green wood!  
Nor lonely the bird, nor his ghastly mate,  
They are each unto each a pride;  
Thrice fonder, perhaps, since a strange, dark fate  
Hath rent them from all beside!  
So, when the night falls, and dogs do howl,  
Sing ho! for the reign of the horned owl!  
We know not alway  
Who are kings by day,  
But the king of the night is the bold brown owl!



Surely, the fisheries of Alaska are inexhaustible. The coasts, the Yukon and other large rivers, and the mountain streams teem with fish of every scale. Some of Alaska's future exports will be the salt cod, isinglass, codliver oil and sounds. Tom cod are found near St. Michael and a little way up the Yukon. If you wish to catch either women or fish, it is best to go about it unmindful of the old adage, "There are as good fish in the sea as ever yet were caught." Study your bait. Women like small courtesies; tom cod like crabs. In the lower river millions, literally millions, of black fish are caught. They are from four to six or seven inches long, and unfortunately strongly resemble leeches, but they are sweetest fish that swim, and are eaten like sardines, bones and all. The uliken, or candle fish, is a curious phosphorescent fish, rare, small, and very delicate in flavor. In the Yukon, burbot attains the weight of six or seven pounds. Its meat is white and firm, like a pollock's. It is of the cod family, and the oil from its liver is commercially valuable. Pike, pickerel, suckers, herring, abound. The clear cold mountain streams are filled with white fish, trout, lake cod and salmon trout. Bluefish, a delicate panfish, shaped like a trout, are ten or twelve inches long in these limpid waters. In the East, they are salt-water denizens. In clear water, too, grayling are caught by the barrellful. If cooked when first taken from the water, their odor is that of

"A bank whereon the wild thyme grows."

One fisherman told me that he had taken a ton a day. They can be caught at retail with the greatest ease, for the silly things will rise to a black thread on a hook.

If you're a genuine angler, however, salmon is the fish worthy of your skill. "King" salmon run first,



when ice breaks up, and they last about three weeks; next come the beautiful "silver" salmon, and last the "dog," so called because, being driest, it is fed to the dogs in winter, rations being one to each working dog. The frozen fish is thrown into the ashes of the fire till the skin cracks. - King salmon is the richest, wariest and gamiest. He keeps his five finny wits right with him, and adroitly escapes all traps set for him. Indians are his pet enemy, for Indians are never rushed for time, they seem to have already entered upon eternity and to feel that they have æons to burn, so to speak. When salmon-fishing, an Indian sits in his canoe for hours, perfectly still, watching for "the riffle." King salmon swim low, but the red man notes the tiny, fast moving whirlpool and rapidly paddles toward the "salmon smoke." There he suddenly stops the canoe, steadies it with the paddle over one side, dextrously catches the struggling fish in his net over the other side. Then he strikes a heavy blow at head and tail with a short club, for a salmon is uglier than you would think a fish could be, and "the king is dead: long live the king!"

If you catch a salmon by hook and line, you must take at least a full half hour and the greatest care, to land him at all. On the Yukon he weighs forty, fifty pounds, sometimes more. Salmon are beautifully shaped and built for speed, long and tapering at both ends. They have been known to swim 1,500 feet a minute, but cannot keep up that tremendous speed long, of course. They are wonderfully strong, and make good headway against a very swift current. They leap barriers and falls twelve and fourteen feet high, and attempt much higher ones. They advance upon such barricades as bravely and persistently as a column of soldiers, and failing to scale them, will leap



again and again till they die of exhaustion and float in numbers upon the surface, yet others heroically take their places to gain the heights. Late in the winter, salmon are obtained in the Porcupine River, so late that they freeze as soon as they are taken from the water. Fully two hundred miles up this river stood an old Hudson Bay trading post, where a little stream winds into the Porcupine. About sixty miles up this is a high ledge of rock which entirely bars the river. This is the salmon's Waterloo—Trafalgar, would perhaps be more appropriate. They try to leap this ledge to spawn in the smooth water above, but there stand the Indians spear in hand, and the slaughter is tremendous. A year ago in September, one man spent two days upon the ledge and speared 2,000 salmon. It sounds exaggerated, but having seen these audacious fish immolated to the handle upon a pitchfork on the Frazer and in other places, I do not doubt the tale. Salmon is the entire living of the Indians on the Yukon in winter. They split the fish, and hang them to dry in the sun upon the fishracks to be seen at every Indian village. The fish are stored in their caches. It does seem as if they might dry enough, but they generally hunger before spring. The odor of dried salmon—I much prefer violet—floats with all the river boats. Some people, white people, like to eat dried salmon uncooked. I don't. I always like to taste novelties, but my advice as to salted seal meat, of which the Aleutians are very fond, and dried salmon is, Don't! The latter, however, is good cooked.

Speaking of water sport, beluga whales are found in numbers near St. Michael's Island, and sometimes venture into the lower Yukon; hair seals, too. If you can't earn your spurs you might your boots, and attach the spurs to the mukluks later.



There is plenty of large game in Alaska too, but it must be sought back in the mountains. Bear of every hue but green are plenty, black, brown, cinnamon, silver-tip, and grizzly. In the southeastern part, near Mt. St. Elias, the grizzlies are the largest in the world and very fierce. The moose along White River are the largest on the continent. A miner called "Win," because of his luck at poker, brought down with us what was said to be the largest moose head and horns ever seen. "Win" was taking it "down below," the Alaskan expression for into the States. It had eighteen clear points on each horn. I saw another moose head which had a spread of seventy-three and a half inches. A grown moose weighs five hundred pounds. Its flesh is tender and palatable, the tips of the horns when "in velvet" are highly prized for soup, and the skin is valuable both to Indians and to whites. One of the traders told me of an Indian named Joseph Stronghead, who was out on his snowshoes one day, unarmed, but carrying a stick. He met a large moose and actually killed it with the stick alone. I should think his tribe would rechristen him Maximus Strong-Arm. I see no reason for the miners of Klondike to starve when a few days' hunting is almost certain to run down one moose at least.

Woodland caribou is good sport. You must follow him far from the haunts of man. He is swift, strong, untamable, a savage; barren land caribou is the barbarian of the same family, and reindeer their civilized brother. Among the mountains of Southeast Alaska, mountain sheep and goats are found. They are large, strong, wild, and almost as good sport, I should imagine, as the chamois. The goat has small black horns, which the tribes near Sitka use for the handles of their "runcible" spoons. Under the coarse hair of the



goat is a fine wool, which they weave for their ceremonial blankets in totemic designs. Mountain sheep leap from rock to rock when pursued, and when in danger are said to turn somersaults and light safely upon their stout twisted horns. These white horns are steamed and pressed by the Indians for the bowls of the large spoons made by the Chilcats for ceremonies. Here is the handsomest one I have ever seen. The handle terminates in a well executed albatross head, and the entire back of the bowl is carved. It must hold a full quart. Yet when a feast is held to admit a boy into full tribal privileges, he must drain it of oil at one draught, a custom like that of the king's cup in Germany, and of the Caucasian's flagon, which will not stand by itself.

Wolves are plentiful, and are probably the progenitors of the Eskimo dogs, which are only a shade less ugly. Wolverines are also common. I have a belt made of their paws which I bought from a very gaily appareled Indian girl. It was fastened by a large brass clock wheel, which she so evidently regretted that I took it off the belt and returned to her.

Rabbits in large numbers are caught by the Indians. The snares are of twisted vegetable fiber strung through the top of a stick and tied around it so that each can be readily removed. The Indian breaks a narrow path and sets these little nooses at intervals with bent twigs. When Br'er Rabbit runs toward the bait, he is caught in the noose, the trap falls, he is swung aloft and hanged by the neck until he is dead. The next day the Indian gathers his rabbits all at once.

The fur trade in Alaska is not what it was, but is yet not to be despised. However, if you're out for sport, what care you? You can at least pose as Nimrod, Jr., before your admiring womankind at home, and bring them furs to prove the justice of the claim. Lynx



are very common, but very fierce. They grow large in Alaska, and there's the excitement of danger in hunting them. A lynx—"link," is the fashionable pronunciation on the Yukon—is of the wildcat family, and when angered curves its back, erects its whiskers and springs just as Tabby does when a strange dog invades her precincts. Lynx like rabbits immensely, and this taste is their undoing. The Indian bends a young sapling down over a rabbit walk, fastens a slip-knot of stout but fine sinew to it, and our wildcat friend furnishes the last "link" in the chain of occurrences. Indians also catch the lynx in traps baited with a bit of deer or moose rubbed with grease from the beaver, whose faint odor attracts the lynx. But the native does not fear the fierce cat. One of the Eskimo reindeer herders one day discovered a lynx crouching behind a tuft of dry grass. He had nothing but his lasso, but he whipped the beast with that till she cowered before him, when he killed her with one blow of his fist, breaking the skull. Lynx skins fetch two to three dollars in trade when brought to the companies by the Indians.

Marten are quite common and are worth about a dollar and a half apiece, but mink are less fashionable, so "the Indian whose untutored mind," etc., sometimes neatly sews marten tails to mink skins to cheat a green trader. Land otter are not to be compared either in beauty or price to the sea otter. The former are smaller and have a flat serrated tail. One unused to seeing the close grayish fur of the dressed beaver when wearing his overcoat of shaggy, coarse, reddish hair would not recognize the animal. Even mice, and Arctic mice are numerous, have soft, heavy coats for winter. Beavers build their houses under a bank, using their long curved teeth to fell trees. They have



curious trowel-like tails, flat, without hair, but scaled and resembling black leather. Perhaps modern builders took the pattern of their trowels from this more ancient one. Indians sometimes cut through three feet of ice to get a beaver, and I regret to say that they have learned to dampen the skin so that gravel may adhere to it, for they sell the pelt for two dollars a pound, trade. The beaver castor is worth from seven to ten dollars a pound. Beavers have the cunningest little feet, long, narrow, pointed, something like a 'possum's. They look, too, much like a tiny woman's hand in a brown glove. Of foxes, there are black, red, white, blue, silver-tip, and cross. "Blue" foxes are now quite fashionable. Silver-tips are rare and very beautiful, and cost in Alaska from fifty to two hundred dollars. It was amusing to note the face of a lady I saw on the Yukon, who was holding on her arm a magnificent silver-tip, a recent gift. "Oh," exclaimed another who had just come into the country, "what a pretty coon skin." Knowledge of furs is to be graded with that of laces, rugs and etchings. I was presented with a beautiful fox skin, flaunting a brush of which he had undoubtedly been proud. Alas and alack! my else aristocratic silver-tip had contracted a *mésalliance*. That patch of orange was "the blot on the 'scutcheon." Still, if his coat had not shown the bar sinister, I should probably not have possessed my beautiful rug at all. "Is it not a pity," said one pitcher gloomily to another, "that however full we come from the well we always go to it quite empty?" "I like to think rather," cheerily answered the other pitcher, "that no matter how empty we go forth, we return from the well brimming."

Both Indians and Eskimo in Alaska are good tanners and furriers. They scrape the backs of the pelts,



cover them with brains or sour dough, roll them tightly and leave them for forty-eight hours. Then the skins are beaten and washed. Some, like the unborn reindeer's, are chewed by the women. Like most savages, the natives are expert trappers. They catch great numbers of ermine, which, though the name suggests queens' trains and kings' mantles, are nothing more royal than weasels. In summer they resemble others of their family who never appear at court; but in winter, because the tiny things are defenseless, they receive the gift of fern seed, or its equivalent. They turn as white as the snow over which they fleetly run, only the yellow and black tips of their tails differing. In Alaska, ermine skins cost but three cents apiece. It's the matching, the labor of piecing the tiny things, and the mode which makes them so costly to My Lady of Beauty, who dons her ermine mantle when winter wraps himself in his, and thinks, alas, neither of them nor of me.

The weasel thieves in silver suit  
The rabbit runs in gray,  
And Pan takes up his frosty flute  
To pipe the cold away.

The flocks are folded, boughs are bare,  
The salmon takes the sea;  
And oh, my fair, would I somewhere  
Might house my heart with thee.



## CHAPTER VII

### ANDREAFSKI AND IKOGMUTE

"Every life has its years in which one progresses, as on a tedious and dusty street of poplars, without caring to know where he is." I can think of nothing else which so perfectly expresses it as Max Müller's "tedious and dusty street of poplars," but if a second comparison were needed, to me it would be: Every life has its years in which one progresses as through the tundras of the Yukon delta, without caring for anything or anybody, stemming the current with an effort, feeling that one might as well swing to and drift. Still the wide sweep of waters like a muddy, inland sea, the hither bank only the interminate edge of a tundra, the far shore imperceptible, sandbars lying just under the water and coming up here and there to breathe; not a tree in sight, not an animal, not a habitation, not even another boat, just interminable wastes before and behind. You remember the boy whose double-vizored cap bewildered him so that he couldn't tell whether he was going to school or coming back. Oh, it is so monotonous and dreary! I listened with unbelief of heart to those who had been up the river and described its beauties. It is so in life. "Oh, yes," we answer the comforter, "but I have had my day. This gray monotony, this uninterest, this barren hopelessness are become mine. No, no, I shall never pass beyond them. They stretch to my life's end." We are impatient with the friend who affirms that he has passed through them and found joy and



beauty beyond. "But we shall not, we—" it's a lie, a perverse lie, for always, and for all things, the dictum stands, "This, too, shall pass away."

The Alaska end of the company knew nothing of the rush by first ship to the north, so it happened that their oldest boat, one built for a freighter and intended to carry but a few passengers, was the only one at St. Michael. It was somewhat uncomfortable for such a crowd at the time, but to most of us the experience, being novel, was thoroughly enjoyed—afterward. The *Healy*, the best boat on the river at that time, had started but a week before for Dawson, and the *Hamilton*, named after Charles H. Hamilton, the first white man to go out from the interior, was but just begun. This steamer, by the way, I afterward saw on its trip up the river. I shall never forget the wild excitement of its arrival. The short summer was ending, and darkness was again visiting the Northland. The *Healy* had tied up to wood, and to wait for morning light, as the river was unprecedentedly low and the sand-bars dangerous. The *Hamilton* had a searchlight, Alaska's first. This was being turned about as she steamed toward us. The Indians were terrified. Those ashore cast themselves upon the ground or dashed into the dense brush to escape that searching eye. One of the pilots stood near by, and seeing I was not alarmed, quelled his fear and inquired, "Big boat carry moon?" I explained it as best I could, and he said, "All same like sun, make same like morning." One of the crew began to cry and wail for his "little" brother—a great, strapping deck-hand—he would be burned alive in that boat all afire. The Indians could not understand why the steamer was not consumed. It was some time before they could be quieted, and they returned aboard with many misgivings. Even we



of the *Healy*, which is a large boat, with commodious staterooms finished in natural fir, a large dining salon, a first-class cook, and everything fit to run upon any civilized river in the States, were abashed at the magnificence of the Hamilton, which was carried as far as a bridal chamber! When it comes to that, it is needless to say that those who are posing as having become inured to every hardship, exposure and deprivation by reason of a Yukon journey, are something beginning with "1." It is altogether too late for such to pose as rivals of Nansen. Why, barring fresh vegetables and meat—and we had salmon and other fish, just out of the water, and fowl of all kinds, only obtainable at home at expensive restaurants and swell hotels, one could find small fault with the fare. The canned vegetables were the very best. People at home do not consider that they are "roughing it" if they are served with asparagus, new peas, deviled turkey, honey, currant jelly, and fine canned fruits of every kind. All these and more we had. I have no patience with these people who are always bewailing the flesh-pots of Egypt, when they must know that they are feeding upon unaccustomed manna. I have always found the traveled, and those accustomed to most at home, the adaptable ones.

But to return to my first experience of the Yukon, and to the only taste of roughing it I had, as far as traveling was concerned. It was one I could not have spared, for the world is growing smaller and more conventional every day. Brakemen are calling the stations of Jerusalem and its environs in the same unintelligible growls in which they announce the towns on the Northern Pacific; Venice is being drained and "improved"; peasants everywhere are beginning to feel like the chorus of a light opera. There won't be



an odd nook nor a retired corner in the world soon, a picturesque costume nor a heathen, except those we shall always have with us.

The boat, like all Yukon steamers, was a stern-wheeler. The small front deck was uncovered, and the tiny salon behind it boasted of a narrow bench around the wall, which compelled one to sit with great dignity. A broken armchair and a small stand completed its furniture. Behind this was the purser's office on one side and the trading store for natives on the other. A narrow passage extended half the boat's length, and the staterooms opened upon it. They were roughly finished in pine, unpainted, uncarpeted. A small corner shelf bore a very small granite washbasin, and a ewer about the size of a cream pitcher. There was also a galvanized iron bucket. As the servants had all stampeded for Klondike, each passenger cared for his own room as best he could, dipping his pitcher into the barrel of river water outside the dining-hall door. There were a number of officials' wives going in to rejoin their husbands. After the women were accommodated with rooms, a few of the men were assigned to the remaining ones. The others slept on the dining-room tables, atop trunks on deck, and upon woodpiles below. Our room had been occupied by miners with gold, which they never left unguarded. The one so cabined must have lighted one cigar by another. In consequence, my pillow would have been soothing to an aching tooth, but as I was fortunately lacking this, it proved to be conducive to an aching head. It really seemed to be stuffed with tobacco, as one makes a spruce pillow. My comforter was misnamed for the same reason, so I gingerly carried both articles into the passage and made shift without. The purser gave me a pair of new blankets and



one sheet; my mackintosh made another cover, and the cape a pillow, so I was in clover—which smells much purer than stale tobacco. The ladies below me had found some excelsior with which they made pillows with towels. One of these ladies, young and stylish, just the sort of woman a man would think only strong for golf and dancing, announced that she didn't intend to sleep over such a floor as that. She found one lady had bethought her of taking up a scrub brush in her trunk. This was searched out of the baggage. Milady next begged some hot water of the cook, and scrubbed that floor as white as her own slim hands. She charmed a man into putting up another shelf and driving some nails; she had begged some terra cotta wrapping paper, and with this she covered shelves and made a splasher. She washed the window, and threw her pretty steamer rug over the bed. A cracker-box served for chair and cupboard both. In short, in a very little time she had made the room clean and cheery. A mirror was hung to reflect its graces and her own, some wild flowers added a touch of home, books and magazines lay around; a woman's hand had transformed the place. Others were clearing their rooms, some washed out their towels, and hung them upon shawlstraps buckled together for clothes lines. There were many amusing make-shifts.

Water was the warm and muddy Yukon, drawn up in buckets. We simply could not drink it at first, it resembled ditch water too strongly; but parched lips beg, so one after another succumbed to thirst. One of the young fellows aboard, a college graduate and post graduate, proved that education does not necessarily kill common sense, by remarking that it was all very well to put up with necessary evils, but



that only a fool would endure avoidable ones. He procured another barrel, some stones and some charcoal, and made a simple but effective filter which provided clear water for everybody. He covered it from the sun and placed it in a draught, so it was cool. There was so much gratitude expressed that several jealously said that it was simple enough, anybody could have done it, which was, of course, quite true, but only he had done it. How clearly every nook and cranny of character is opened under the light of travel, especially boat travel. Even that of a diplomat, surely, would divulge itself if the Atlantic trip were not so short. This young fellow wore well under the strain. Was a mother tired, perhaps baby would like to go on deck with him; was a pencil broken, his was the first knife produced; was strength needed, the ex-football player had plenty; when there was no cribbage board, he made a very creditable one. He kept out of quarrels, and gave neither word nor ear to the gossip. I don't think anybody aboard would grudge him a bonanza mine should he happen to strike one.

The meals were revelations indeed. No seats had been assigned us aboard ship, so at sound of the bell everybody rushed for the dining room as if impelled by starvation itself. The long pine table was bare at first, but afterward a red tablecloth was produced. A few days' friction rubbed off the veneer of civilization, at least in spots, and people reached and grabbed, and some who at home were undoubtedly considered well bred, ate like ravening beasts. We were a "mixed lot." This eating with publicans and sinners was novel, at least in that they were not our brand of sinners. One day I found myself with a prostitute one side, a professional gambler the other, and an elderly



Frenchman opposite, who preserved himself like a brandied cherry with unnumbered potatoes, so that when he opened the door of his stateroom you would think you were passing a saloon. Beside him sat the young girl he had just married to succeed the squaw he had cast off. Further along, there was an unshaven, tall, ramshackle man, with loose clothes and vicious face, who was said to be an expert geologist from Washington, D. C., and who had mined in every country in the world. He had evidently treasured every land's oaths also, for he possessed a cabinet of them. This man's peculiarity was constantly discovering from the deck rocks which certainly "carried" so and so. My faith in even his ability wavered after his excited discovery of sulphur upon a mountain side. It looked to my ignorant eyes remarkably like lichen, and it proved to be simply that and nothing more. One of the gamblers was the most detestable looking man I ever saw. Though young, he was bald-headed, and his pate was pink and shiny. He had shifty blue eyes, and wore a sweater which set forth his beauties admirably. He it was that was taking the woman I spoke of to a Dawson dance hall. She, too, was hideous, bearing in her face the vile-ness of her life. How they must have hated each other!

Oh, what was that, that jar and scraping? We knew the sound thereafter. We were on a sandbar. There we lay for twenty-four hours, till at ten o'clock high-tide we floated off. The engineer seized upon the delay to clean the boilers, "for you know the mingling of salt and fresh water crust will froth and blow up a boiler." I didn't know it, but that is in no wise remarkable, seeing that upon that wonderful trip I struck very few things that I did know.



Frequent were the jokes among the passengers about the wealth with which they would retake the journey. "See this pocket?" queried one young fellow, turning the empty repository inside out. "When I come out my gold will be shipped by freight, and my diamonds will light up the deck." One day a lady gave her baby a silver dollar to play with. "If he has that going in, what will he be throwing round when he comes out?" laughed one of the others.

There was room for two hammocks in the little cabin, and two young fellows, both of whom happened to be tall, slept therein. One of these, I remember, was very "finicky" about his attire, which he changed so often that it was a source of admiring wonder how he managed it. He kept sundry telescopes under the benches, and it was quite a common occurrence to be called to stand while "Willy" dived under for another necktie or a clean handkerchief. But he was a manly young fellow, who sang well and helped us past those dreadful sand dunes. One day, I met him in the passage looking hot and tired. "What," exclaimed I, "have you found to do?" "I've been down in the engine room washing. I tell you it was hot work, but things are clean. I say, though, it takes a trip like this to teach a fellow how easy women's thoughts and women's work make life for a man," and he hurried away to cool off. The other "cabin passenger" was a young Canadian, with a very boyish pink and white face. It was a mercy he was not a quarter inch taller, or he would have had to swing his hammock in the passage. He was very thin and stooped as if his rapid growth had quite exhausted him. Instead of getting under the bench for a necktie, his frequent raids were for his rifle. The day we stuck on the sandbar he was in his element and gumboots to the hips, wading



about and over the sandbars for game. He walked for miles, and actually brought back some birds. We spent Fourth of July aboard, and he, though a Canadian, was the only man who knew the proper number of guns in a salute. This young fellow was a druggist, but as his goods would not be up that year, he was going to mine. There was considerable slight illness on the boat going up the river, attributable, as we afterward found, to drinking from every clear, cool spring we found, and he was very kind with his medicines and suggestions, as was another druggist dubbed "Doc."

How well I can see them all now—the man who fished for days with unwavering patience and not even a bite; the tall fellow known to swell Chicago athletic clubs, who muttered only half thankfully that he was glad that three trunks were long enough to afford an afternoon siesta, he should hate to ache over four. Then there was the fat and cross-eyed gambler, with his emeralds and his wondrous assurance, who intruded himself into every group, and who demanded of a lady at St. Michael, when the revenue cutter officers came over to visit, "Why don't you introduce your friends to me?" She replied quickly and with a sweetly clear voice, "Because I do not know you, and my friends do not wish to."

The men smoked so industriously that their united efforts would have run the engine surely, and the tobacco smoke make a very creditable showing from the stack. This perfect satisfaction in smoking is a great mystery to a woman. To a man it seems to afford a comfort, a serenity, a companionship, an absolute content that neither religion nor love, nor both combined, can impart.

For nearly two hundred miles, the Aphoon, or delta,



extends between the flat banks broken by sandbars. "The Foot of the Mountain," as the Indians picturesquely call the end of the highlands, is 193 miles from the river's mouth. Those seemingly endless flats are passed at last, and the hills begin to rise. The rain has ceased, the mists have rolled away, unbelief is shamed, wild flowers smile, trees wave their green pennants joyfully. So the fourth day from St. Michael brought us to Andreafski, 216 miles. The Ekimo are now left behind, just as we had learned a few words of their greetings. No kiaks are to be seen now, only birch bark canoes. The men's are covered at the ends, signifying that they must brave stormier weather; the women's are wider, and so steadier. The canoes floating interior rivers are often gaily decorated with porcupine quills, but not on the business-like "great river." All Yukon Indians use canoes, but those of Southeast Alaska make their boats of hollowed logs, and sometimes fifty or sixty feet long and five or six wide. They have good lines and high prows, carved and colored in totemic designs, sometimes very artistically. The Indians of the Yukon, though all Tinnehs, are divided into many classes, speaking entirely different languages. But in their astonishing honesty they are as one. You might leave valuables with them for years, articles, I mean, considered valuable by them, even a rifle, beloved of their barbarian hearts, and you would find them intact to a pin upon your return, unless they might have learned to steal from some "civilized" man. This absolute honesty is very strange among a people without laws either of God or man. A man who has hired large numbers of Yukon Indians for years told me that he had never had but one case of theft, although nothing was watched. One of his crew stole a ham. He said nothing to the



offender, but simply sent ahead a runner to the Indian's village, where he informed the tribe of the theft. When the boat reached the hamlet, the thief was put off. That was his sole punishment. When the boat returned the poor fellow rushed aboard and begged piteously to be allowed to earn the ham a dozen times. He was completely ostracised by the village, his own wife wouldn't speak to him. He would kill himself. He was taken back, and upon ample restitution, word was sent to his village that the Indian had atoned. When a new boat was being built at St. Michael, the natives, Ekimo these, carefully picked up the nails dropped by the carpenters and returned them, though they were highly pleased if given some.

Speaking of a runner, it is astonishing the pace the Alaskan Indians can keep up. One afternoon a squaw ran beside the boats for home, keeping even over rough ground without effort, and arriving at the village with us. When we were at Stebbins, fifteen hard miles from St. Michael, an Indian ran there with a message and returned in half a day, thirty miles for three dollars. They like riding, however, for style, and will drive if they have but a single half-starved dog, and must push themselves along by one foot like a small boy on a sled.

But here we are, at Andreafski, 216 miles from St. Michael, the hills and our spirits rising. All the population came down to see us, but that does not imply great numbers. The belle of the village was indisputably a young girl dressed in a fur parka, with large blue beads dangling from her nose, and strands of the same hanging in front of her ears to her shoulders, and ending in brass rings and small brass bells. Her belt was of brass buttons. Copper bracelets adorned



her slim wrists; in fact, these appeared to be worn by all the women of Andreafski who could be considered "in the swim." Unlike our own ornaments, however, they impoverished no one, as the women themselves beat them from chunks of native copper. I bought some of these bracelets from the women, and one of them now adorns the round white wrist of a little pianist friend of mine whose hair matches the copper to a shade. Some of the women here were tattooed quite strikingly. I arranged a group upon the flowers of the high bank, but the camera put the bravest to flight. In a twinkling they were gone.

The blue grass was shoulder high already, and it was but the 7th of July. Most of the roofs were spread with it to dry for the matting which is their rugs, bed, walls, tapestry, and portieres. One man was seated upon the ground making a fish trap. From driftwood he had whittled thin strips about six feet long, and laid them at regular distances upon the ground. The cross-pieces were fastened by withes made from fine roots which run along near the top of the ground everywhere and wetted to make them pliable. The trap, finished, would be gathered in at the bottom, and a shorter part would be put inside, having an opening in the bottom. This trap is fixed in the stream. Mr. Fish carelessly swims straight ahead into the cage, and then cannot find his way out. These traps are very light and strong, and cost about twenty-five dollars.

Looking at the habitations of the Andreafski citizens, it would seem that, like Topsy, they "just grewed." Half underground and rounded but a little above, they resemble great worm casts more than houses made by hands. They never seem new either. Still, I actually saw one in course of construction. Posts, logs, had



been set for the corners. These were grooved down the sides. The logs were flattened at the ends, and then slid into these grooves. Logs support the sod roof.

At Andreafski we saw the first salmon racks, the communal elevators, so to speak. The salmon when caught are split, and the backbones removed, then they are hung high from the dogs for the sun to cure. At Andreafski, there was much salmon roe also ripening in the sun. This was especially odoriferous. Dried fish is the Indians' only winter food, and, frozen stiff, is stacked away like cord wood in caches.

I stopped to speak to a woman holding the inevitable baby. By signs I asked her how many children she had. She laid three sticks upon the ground and smiled. The Tinnah women are treated as nearly equal to their lords, and fear not to raise their vigorous protest if they do not get what they want. Indians who work on the boats are the village aristocrats, rich, blasé, and traveled. But the Seventy-five among the Four Hundred are pilots. All are paid in trade. I remember a funny scene here. He wanted flour, man-like, it would be something to eat; the squaw wanted a new calico gown, womanlike, something to wear; they compromised upon a blanket, "something for the house." Equality there is not, though Yukon squaws are the new women of Indian nations. Still I never saw a man and woman talking together for long, and never saw a young man conversing with a girl apart; perhaps that is not proper.

Squaws carry their babies upon their backs, tied on if little, riding pickaback if they are larger, while the mother stoops under the burden, and walks noiselessly in her moccasins. You can always tell the squaws



that have been educated at the various missions by their carrying babies in their arms, while they clump awkwardly along in stiff, heavy shoes. Their children never cry, and the babies very seldom. I heard one whining one day, and remarked it. "Oh," said a miner, "that baby's a half-breed. The whiter a baby the more trouble it is."

Almost everybody I met in Alaska opposed the missions to the Indians. Miners said that they lost all their virtue and gained all the white vices the minute they could read. But I think the main objection was, after all, that they now understood the value of money, and had raised their prices for work and sales. Only a year or so ago, they cared nothing for money, it was only barter with them. They are good bargainers. One of their peculiarities is, they cannot understand that price is ruled by the law of supply and demand. You can never again buy anything lower of an Indian than the highwater marked price it has reached. They have learned to be grasping certainly, but it strikes me it is more from imitating the greed of the whites than from the teaching at any of the missions. One of them at Circle City modestly asked a dollar an hour and board to pack to the mines, and when that was acceded to, insisted that his partner must go on the same terms. Anything means "board." An Indian will clean a grouse for you and banquet himself off the raw entrails of the bird, and will eat the uncooked entrails of a rabbit for desert. You may judge of what would be considered unfit to eat when I tell you that their most esteemed delicacy is salmon heads buried in the ground till putrified. Still, we can hardly express disgust at this when we remember that many white epicures relish cheese that need not be wrapped, as Charles Lamb said, but could



be led home by a string. I have not learned much in my life, but one lesson in which I am almost perfect is that of seeing the same human nature, likes and motives in very diverse people, and it gives me a real sympathy with things otherwise not to be understood. It is so when one of their Shamans pulls out a pain and blows it away, sometimes abstracting a stick or a moose string from the afflicted part. What is more ridiculous about the proceeding than that of many of our various scientist friends? Indeed, the great Dr. Charcot himself is not above hypnotism.

One thing odd and indisputable about the Indians is their presentiments, or whatever you may wish to call them. One of the pilots aboard the ill-fated *Weare* which spent the larger part of last summer high and dry upon a sandbar, left the boat just before the accident, insisting that she would stick precisely where she did. These things appear to be common among them.

Whenever our boat touched, the Indian crew rushed ashore and shook hands with their male friends in the latest dude fashion, once only, soberly, and with hands extended high. Then they chattered and giggled like so many boarding-school girls, and paraded up and down the beach with their arms about one another. I never saw a jollier people. The boat crew were always dancing, singing, good naturedly scuffling, when not at work. They never quarreled nor acted grumpy, and they told long stories that I ached to understand. Life is one long delightful holiday to them.

Above Andreafski, the left bank rises ambitiously into spruce-covered mountains, but the right shore still stretches out lazily, taking no interest in anything, and dawdles out of sight. No animals are seen,



neither did I hear a bird. It is utterly silent. For many miles at a stretch there was not even a fishing station nor a tent to be seen. Why, a solitary Indian standing upon a mountain top waving, threw the whole boat into wildest excitement. But now fish traps appear in the river, a birch-bark canoe, another, some "town" must be near. It proved to be Ikogmute, or, more commonly, the Russian Mission, 315 miles from St. Michael, population about 150, every poll of which, it is safe to assert, was on the broad beach when we came in. To me there are many interesting things at Ikogmute, one of them, of course, being the Russian church, the largest and finest in Western Alaska. I wondered as I picked my way across the beach and up the straight and narrow path ascending the Hill of Zion if Father Orloff had not used that road as a simile many a time. Plenty of room and easy walking on the sands of the death river, but hard climbing and easy backsliding on the slippery upward path. To the right was the cemetery, clinging to the mountain as if using the white double crosses for staffs. We passed the priest's house, and the ex-priest's, whose daughter the present incumbent had married, and struggled up the path, slippery after the rain. It was so thronged by mosquitoes that we could scarcely crowd through them. The church is of characteristic Russian architecture, and is painted dark red with white trimmings, and blue domes bearing the Greek cross. The extra top-piece indicates the place of the sacred head, and the diagonal the crossed feet. The church was built by the Indians, and the older one, erected in 1851, is being demolished. Like all Russian churches, it faces the east, whence came salvation, and prayers are made toward Jerusalem. There are no seats; Russian churches never have them. It is not consid-



ered seemly to sit in the presence of the King of kings. This church until recently contained some very handsome hand-carved frames with saints' pictures, but these, unfortunately, have been consigned to a store-room, and ordinary modern gilt ones substituted. There is a chandelier that must astonish the natives, and handsome standing candelabras at each side of the doors opening into the sacred part. The screen is painted white, paneled with gilt moulding, and containing pictures of Bible scenes. That of St. Michael closely resembles Della Fox. One of the curious things owned by the church is a very handsome treasure box of bronze, about two feet long, made in 1800, and sent by the Czar. It opens by two keys, and plays soft music when it is unlocked. Father Orloff, the priest, though a Russian, was educated in the public schools of San Francisco. He seems an intelligent and worthy man, but I should like to know how many robes he wears at once. The top one is hunter's green, and I know there's a black one and a brown one. The Russian mission has a little steamer of its own, called the *Explorer*.

The Indian houses at Ikogmute are comparatively large, cleaner—or, rather, not so dirty as in most places. They stand upon the ground, and are solidly built of logs. The opening is elliptical, and is about eighteen inches from the ground, so that one must step up and bend double at the same time. Indians do it rapidly, and it did seem that a superior intelligence ought to achieve what they so easily do. But gray matter has nothing to do with the case. It is being brought up to it, and I wasn't. Inside the door are pegs to assist the queer motion. The edges of the entrances are worn as smooth as a water pebble. The doorway invariably faces the river, for do not food



and drink—water for other purposes would be clearly an affectation—come from it? Yet sneer not; the early Britains considered two baths, one upon entering the world and the other upon leaving it, quite as much as could be expected. The first wife, for Tinnehs are polygamous, is “the wife toward the river.” The fire is in the center. A kettle hangs over it from a crotch, and the overhead logs are festooned with soot. Down both sides of the house a log platform serves as a continued-in-our-next bedstead. A pole, beautifully darkened and polished by dirt and grease, edges this platform. Above it, a narrow shelf holds the small belongings of each family, while the larger ones are thrown under the dormitory. At the end of the house are such few household articles as it boasts. In one house, I obtained a seal oil bag of beautiful amber tints. I tried hard, too, to secure a three-pronged crotch used as a stepladder to reach things stored among the rafters. It was black and rubbed to a fine polish. Nothing I offered was the least inducement. They had always had it and would always keep it. I told Dr. Jackson of this primitive stepladder, and he tried his persuasive powers, with the priest to supplement them, but neither obtained it. The doctor wanted it for the Omaha Exposition, and I for a curious stool to put in my hall at home. If I had a month to wheedle and bribe those smiling but “sot” Indians, I think I might secure that bit of antedeluvian furniture, but those of you who travel the Yukon and stop at the Russian Mission, may safely count upon seeing it, in the righthand back corner of that house while the house stands. And I did want that mounting stool!

Close by the Russian Mission is a slough in which the N. A. T. & T. Company's boats winter. This



slough heads toward another stream. A portage of about a mile or two connects them, and the great Kuskokwim River. This route is used summer and winter.



## CHAPTER VIII

### HOLY CROSS MISSION AND INDIAN MYTHS

As the *Healy* swung slowly up to shore, there were sounds of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. At least a score of half-starved dogs sat along the beach, noses in air, baying the boat with long-drawn howls, occasionally broken by a vicious snap at one other. Seated upon the steep, stony bank was a group of Indian women, the center one aged, half blind, thin, with dusty hair hanging unkempt about her wrinkled face and claw-like hands clasping her knees as she rocked to and fro bewailing her dead with mournful cries and low, piteous moans, like those of a wounded animal. The women about her had come to assist, and were also wailing as the boat drifted in. It was scarcely a pleasant or a propitious greeting, but proved to be no foretaste of the delightful visit we had at Kosoreffski.

One of the Indian crew was first to land and leaped quickly up to where the old crone sat. Throwing himself beside her, he tried to comfort her. The other women were now giving all their attention to the landing and I watched these two with interest. In a few minutes she began talking eagerly with the boy, her grandson, and then like a child she utterly forgot her grief. I had hurried ashore and taken little Serene. The old woman beckoned to me to bring her there, and when I did so she touched her hair with delight, pointing to a sunbeam striking upon a rock, and making those cooing sounds which, the world over, express



motherly love and longing, "There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." She called something to the boy, and he brought her a tiny birch-bark basket, which she gave to Serene with motions that said, "Here is a little basket for a little girl." The other women crowded around, too, and gave the child baskets and pebbles, while the filthy Indian children, with sore faces and tangled hair, looked in amazement at her. These are the first Indians I ever saw who gave anything without expecting something in return, or who ever showed the least gratitude for gifts or favors. I had taken some colored candy ashore, and gave each one a lump or two of it. Some of the children hung back, but the elders pushed them forward to get their share. Several times I was about to give more to those who had candy, but in every case the children opened their hands to show me that they had been served. You would hardly see that among white children, who taste sweets much oftener than these poor things. While I was giving out the candy and trying to talk to some of the Indians, one of them had beckoned Serene to her, and when I turned round there was the child with her curls tightly braided into two little tails hanging at the side of her face. How this did amuse them all; they laughed like so many happy children, but I, aghast, hurried my little daughter aboard the boat, unbraided the funny tails and sprinkled liberally with insect powder.

After our own supper, I went about among the native houses where most of them were preparing theirs. Most of the Yukon Indians now cook in iron kettles, though you will often still see soup heated in a wooden dish by dropping into it hot stones from the fire. One of the women was stirring an ill-smelling mess with this huge wooden spoon, cut from a solid



piece of wood and really graceful in design. It must hold a quart. The stew was ladled into wooden dishes also hollowed out from wooden blocks. They were old and were colored by age and grease to a rich mahogany. I bought a dish and the spoon from her. She wiped the rancid grease from them carefully on the grass, and for lack of any other wrapper, I carried them in wisps of hay. Even I could not abide the Sampsonic odor of these household articles, and I afterward had them boiled in lye to remove the accumulated oil. It is the unvarnished truth that these two articles produced three-quarters of a bucket of thick soft soap. The woman's kettle hung from a forked stick, suspended from the small smoke hole above, which hole was decorated by a deep sable fringe of soot. From it bits would occasionally flutter down into the soup. This seemed to be regarded in the light of seasoning, and was not removed. At the door sat an Indian, who grinned at me amiably as I crawled through the lowly portal. He had a large piece of the black, paste-like tobacco which they chew, stuck back of his ear and hanging to some hair. This is common among the Indians, but is not considered elegant, even by themselves. The swells have small, elliptical boxes, in which to carry snuff or chewing tobacco. I have several of these boxes, which are very neatly made. One is of native copper beaten out, and another of brass. Wooden bottoms and covers are fitted in.

On every side I noted the signs of industry. Unlike the Southern Indians, these do not regard work as disgraceful and only fit for squaws and poor white trash. The men are as industrious as their wives, and treat them as nearly equal. Racks were covered with birch bark, long withes for fishtraps lay upon the low sod roofs, whereon feathery bushes grew, the only pretty



thing about the habitations, the well filled salmon racks bespoke plenty for the winter, and there was little of that painful poverty to be seen in most Indian villages.

Holy Cross Mission, the Catholics' most important station at Kosoreffski, is 410 miles from St. Michael. Its buildings, large and commodious for Alaska, stand in a little meadow surrounded by mountains. A high white cross spreads its arms wide to the heathen, and just beyond it you may see the boys' building. The sisters' house for the girls is shown in Chapter XVI. The little log chapel glories in windows of ground glass with crosses of red. An Indian child shyly pointed out these wonderful windows to me as if he feared I might never see their equals. I thought of stately cathedrals I had seen, pointing proudly upward, with clustering pinnacles and marble columns, with stone work fretted to an airy grace, with peal of organ and voice of surpliced choir filling the lofty nave; I thought of the gorgeous beauty of the great windows, the Christ benignly bending over the little ones he loved, a patch of crimson lying beneath upon the marble floor like a pool of His precious blood; Magdalene in robe of mourning amethyst, wiping His feet with her amber hair; John the Beloved comforting Mary in her blue robes of truth. But as I looked upon the little log chapel with its cheap colored glass and upon the eager face of the dusky child, bathed in the golden light of the sun, I saw that the spirit of these was that which filled the stately cathedral, and a sweet, still voice said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

As we came up to the Mission, a long line of girls in charge of two sisters straggled along. "We are all so tired," said the sweet-faced sister, "that we can



scarcely reach home. We have been four mountains over, berrying, and the girls want to go to bed without supper, they are so exhausted," and indeed they looked so. The result was we saw only the boy pupils. We went into the little parlor and had a visit with Father Ragaru and Sister Mary Joseph. Sister Mary Stephen, the head of the house, was away at the time. I afterward met this strong character at St. Michael. Her face proclaims the ability which is recognized by everyone. We went into the school hall, and the pleasant-faced young lay-brother brought in his charges. We were a diverse company. Dr. Sheldon Jackson, moderator of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, Mrs. Beiler, president of the Methodist Women's Board of Missions, Father Ragaru, a French Jesuit, the lovely Mary Joseph, of the Canadian Order of St. Anne, with her high bred manner, Captain Barr, and myself, of a family Congregational since it quit being Puritan, and American for 270 years. Some of the miners from the boat had now come in, and we had the merriest informal school examination, surely, that ever was held. We asked questions as we liked, and the pupils answered very creditably, even for white boys of their ages. When asked their favorite generals, they eagerly replied: Lee, Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan. "George Washington was the first President of the United States," answered one boy, when another interrupted, "Oh, he was greater than that, he was a general."

The pupils did not answer by rote, indeed they could not, as we all asked what we pleased, but showed a general intelligence and information that was surprising, and we told the lay brother so. The boys were all dressed in uniform, red blouses trimmed with white braid, caps with gilt bands and seal boots. They are extremely proud of this showy garb, and it attracts





CHURCH AT HOLY CROSS MISSION — KOSOREKSKI, ALASKA.







the Indians to the school, at which there are sixty pupils. Catholics study these adjuncts, and it would be well if more Protestants did. I took a picture as they came down with the lay-brother to see the *Healy*. After the questions, the boys sang for us. The Indians of the Yukon have very good voices, and readily pick up airs. I remember one day hearing one of the crew singing Suanee River with almost the pathos of a negro. I would suggest that somebody send some juvenile song books up the Yukon. These boys sang an odd mixture; one of them, delivered with great gusto and business-like precision, was "Billy Boy." "Can she make a cherry pie, Billy Boy, Billy Boy," they inquired earnestly, and answered themselves with satisfaction, "She can make a cherry pie, fast's a cat can wink her eye, she's a young thing and cannot leave her mother." The song was very touching. One of the older boys brought out an autoharp and played "Nearer, my God, to Thee."

Next, "Did we want to see the boys drill?" Of course we did. The older boys got their wooden guns, very good imitations, which each little soldier had carved for himself, and the captain brandished his wooden sword with cross hilt covered with tin foil, and tied a red, white and blue ribbon around his arm for "colors," as they had no flag. They really drilled very well. I noticed the little boys appeared restless at the end, and that one of them spoke to the boyish lay-brother, who hesitated, but finally, with a dubious look at Dr. Jackson, who is U. S. Commissioner of Education in Alaska, asked if we would like to see the small boys' parody. He explained that the little fellows were very jealous when the larger boys began to drill, and carrying sticks for guns, would imitate the evolutions as ridiculously as possible, for good-natured



revenge. To please them, he had allowed the little fellows to perform their parody, which the older ones no longer resented. Well, the youngsters came out, borrowing the others' guns, and fell into the crookedest of lines. Each wore the most idiotic expression he could assume, and the captain was so pompous that he almost fell over backward, like a pouter pigeon. He ordered them to "march, go, get, walk." Some started, more looked stupidly at him. I laughed till I cried. If De Wolf Hopper's Cambodians in *Wang* were half so funny as these seven and eight year old Indian boys, he could never finish the opera. The captain's explanatory commands and affected impatience over their imbecility were side-splitting. When the column was finally got into motion he called out, "double-quick." One boy ran wildly here and there, the others performed the dead march in Saul. The end boy, the baby of the school, was wonderfully funny. He fell over his gun, bumped into the corporal, and wore so dense a look of stupidity that it was a real relief to see an irrepressible smile break forth occasionally when he gratified himself with some new awkwardness. The captain's efforts to stop his troops were even more laborious than to get them into motion. Like all genuine Americans, they were hard to arouse, but harder to quiet. "Halt!" cried he. "Stop. Go no farther. Quit. Hold your legs, you good-for-nothings." After all the others had individually obeyed orders, the small end boy had to be forcibly brought to a stand.

After this, Sister Mary Joseph took me out into the old-fashioned garden of vegetables bordered with flowers, California poppies, immortelles, mignonette, marigolds, red poppies. She gave each of us a great bunch of the dear "homey" things, and I held a sprig of



sweet mignonette to my face to make me feel happy and good. At the end of the garden was a little arbor, and within it a succession of steps covered with white cotton strewn with spruce and fern leaves, leading to a little image of Mary and the Blessed Child. Here and there stood tin cans filled with wild flowers. This shrine, the sister said, was daily dressed by the girls. The sister also gathered us a lot of fresh vegetables, a gift only to be appreciated by those who have been living altogether on canned goods, no matter how choice, for any length of time.

Captain Barr is one of those rare men who always remember people's tastes and talents. Knowing Father Ragaru's valuable work in reducing Tinneh language to writing and my appreciation of all ethnologic knowledge, he suggested that the father show me his manuscripts. The others returned to the boat, and I spent a fascinating hour over them. Father Ragaru has been in the country but ten years, yet the Indians say he speaks the difficult Tinneh language with absolute perfection, as if it were his mother tongue, not only in construction but intonation. How he has achieved it is beyond my ken. Father Ragaru showed me a large ledger-shaped blank book in which, in his small, exquisite chirography, he had written the inflexions of verbs. *Carry* alone filled twenty-three of these large pages, written closely with ink and a fine pen. He has divided the forms of the verbs into simple or indicative, iterative, frequentative, and habitative, for instance:

*I start,*  
*I start again,*  
*I often start,*  
*I always start.*

But remember that for all the different meanings the



equivalent of start in Tinneh is not simply changed in form, but an entirely different word is used. There are still other phases of the meaning, though, indicated by the divisions: Attentive (tried to start), reflective (I am the person benefited by the starting), fictative (I tried but failed to start), continuative (I kept going), and terminative (stopped going). I really thought myself it was in-terminable, and remember again, all these are distinct words, not variations. But it is not yet finished, there are different negatives for each, and many different adjectives for every class of verb. Why, the irregular French verbs of my girlhood are monotony itself compared with these. When you arrive, for instance (and I couldn't arrive at a knowledge of this verbose language if my salvation depended upon it), if you arrive at a high place, it is one word, if you arrive at a low place it is another, and so on. I realize now why the Tinneh sometimes fail to dry enough salmon to keep from growing hungry toward spring: they have had to learn a new verb. I know why the infant mortality is so high: the young children have struggled beyond their strength with the intricacies of their language. I understand why the Tinneh is so glad to learn English: it is so restful, it is such a saving of time and tongue. He can say there are twelve men, instead of "ten men and two men added."

The Indians are given to nicknames. The steamer *P. B. Weare* is "the boat with two chimneys" (smoke-stacks). The *Alice* has a guard over her stack, and is dubbed "Chimney with the hat;" one of the sisters is called "Plump-and-jolly;" another, "Bird-that-chirps-fast," because she is lively and talks rapidly. Babies are named at two or three weeks, and some, in the extravagant verbal usage of the Tinneh, are



called whole sentences. One little girl at the mission is named "My-mother-told-me;" another, "Devil's mother," while the names of many of them are so disgustingly obscene that Father Ragaru would not translate them for me. These names are very common among a people who have no regard for chastity, and who have gained none by contact with white miners. Nulato is a market for squaws, who are regularly sold to these civilized(?) men, who have had the audacity to complain to Father Ragaru about his opposition.

Father Ragaru has not only completely mastered the Tinneh language and reduced it to writing, but he is indefatigable in obtaining from the Indians, not only of his mission but of all the tribes he meets, their ancient myths and history. He showed me many books filled with these, taken down from the very lips of the old, and from the games and stories of the young. These he has carefully translated from Tinneh into French, and is now preparing some in English. The Indians are extremely sensitive to ridicule and it is very difficult to obtain these stories, which are ethnologically so valuable, and which it will soon be too late to preserve; but Father Ragaru has won their liking and their admiration so that he has obtained a large number of these traditions which have passed on from father to son for hundreds of years. He is very exact in his work, and it should all be obtained for our own Bureau of Ethnology at Washington instead of being sent to France. Many of the stories told are so obscene that their filth can cover nothing good; some are imaginative and really poetic; some are tribal history and deeds; some are allegorical and ethical. A number have lost their meaning to the people and although they still repeat them, none of the tribe understand them in the least. Among the boys at the mission are a



number of very bright half breeds, and they have materially assisted in gathering the mass of valuable material Father Ragaru has. He is very modest about his work, and shows piles of manuscript as if the great amount of work represented were but trifling. He is very jolly and derived much amusement from my attempt to read the continued-in-our-next words of the Tinnéh language. He was pleased to say that my accent promised I could readily learn it. I told him that in view of the length of the words and the shortness of life, not to mention the complications of the Tinnéh grammar and of mortal affairs, I should not attempt it. What is the use, anyway, when a few more years will provide me, in a breath, with all the knowledge of the universe? So those who assume to be wise in future things say, though I don't believe a word of it.

Father Ragaru gave me a little book, "Catholic Prayers and Hymns in the Tinnéh Language," from the "*Indian Boys' Press*, Holy Cross Mission, Kosoreffski, Alaska, 1897." It was set up, printed and bound by three boys of the school. The cover is of black figured calico. Alex Sipary, one of the compositors, a half breed boy of about fourteen, wrote his name very nicely upon the fly-leaf for me.

Perhaps you would be interested in a selection from the beginning of the book. In case you wish to read it aloud to your friends I will repeat the direction given by one of the miners as to the proper Tinnéh accent: "Read very rapidly, and as if you had a hare-lip and a cold in your head."

#### JESUS CHRISTUS

Gotsetzagaditaihzen

Tenágotó nen yóget te-înta; nuûsa kádogutá,  
tetlèkzen tenadzáya nen gonðnlá ketoyón inlân;  
nogoyð konencóca yògit gocátetân.



Makatogutáye tenattònelaih tsògoyan; tsogutlàkazen tenarokálganitneih tsogutlàkazen tenátsetagàtatna gamrokàlgatzeneih tsogoká, tenatsèinni tsogutlàkazen tsogutokella tógogon. Isogutlakatzen gokotsetze tenalilo. Amen.

When the Catholics first founded this mission they were much distrusted by the Indians. The sisters had taken in a little cripple girl, who seemed to be frightened and persisted in leaving. The spirit grew among the pupils. The sisters could not find out what was the trouble. At last some Indians were overheard spreading the fearful tale. The pupils had heard a strange and terrible noise every day. This awful sound proceeded from a huge eel which was concealed behind a mountain, and every day a sister went to feed the dreadful creature. By and by this beast—they seemed to regard it as the frightful “worm” of ancient Saxon lore, which has always affected my imagination more than any other horror—would bear young and these would spread all over the Yukon country and kill the people. By dint of much persuasion the noise was finally located. It was—you would not guess it if I gave you a thousand chances—an alarm clock, rightly named indeed!

Another story went the rounds of the Tinnah gossips that the priest had buried a child in the cellar of the church and that the teachers were eating the dead.

Father Ragaru says that their tribal religious beliefs are of the vaguest. He has not yet succeeded in finding from the old people who have not been influenced by the whites what their ideas of such things are. Most of them assert, however, that only the Shamans have souls. When the Russian introduced among the Indians blankets inoculated with small-pox, the Tinnahs died in great numbers. It is these,



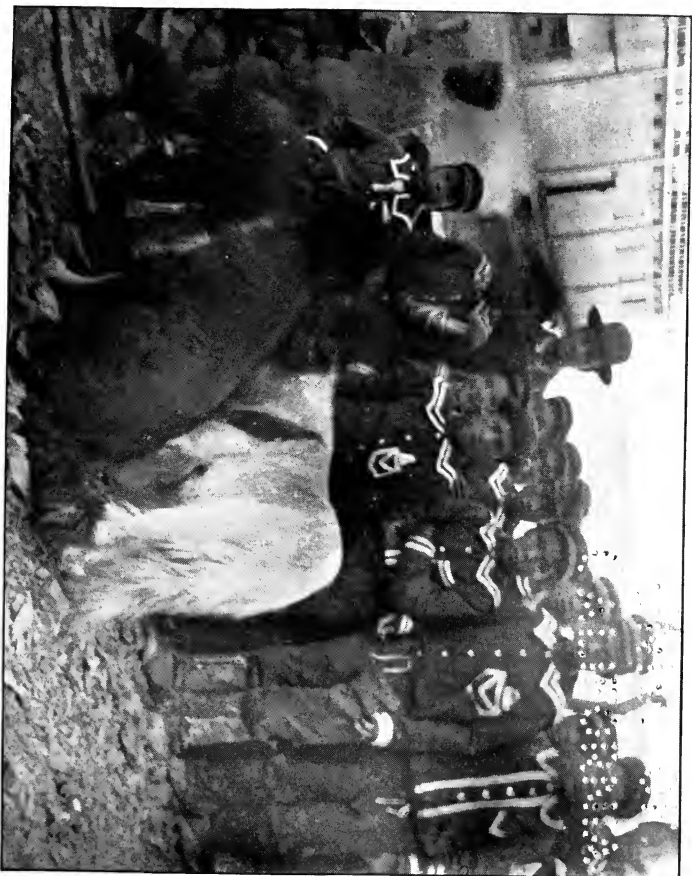
their descendants say, who, reincarnated, are coming again into the Yukon country as whites. They can't keep out. Perhaps our friends the theosophists will enlighten us upon this subject, for they surely can. There is nothing under heaven or earth, or even the universe at large, that they do not know. If there were, they would simply consult one of their Mahatmas and the thing would be as plain as a, b, c.

It is extremely interesting to find among a barbarous people many tales which seem to be common to all peoples, varied a little to suit the race and age. Such myths seem to be fundamental truths allegorically told, but are accepted by the ignorant as real. Among the Tinnehs, for instance, is one which you may trace through many times and climes. As they tell it, the story is almost identical with the German were-wolf.

The Tinnehs say that once upon a time there was a woman who lived virtuously with her husband and children by the great river. But very frequently she would be missing, and at such times a fierce bear prowled about near the village and carried off the unwary. So daring became the devastations of this bloody beast that a party of hunters banded together to track down and kill him. The husband of the woman was one of those who bravely attacked the bear and was killed by it. The woman afterward returned to her own shape and children. I was not able to make out the ending. But there we have Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, "Serene going 'way off and naughty girl coming," the angel and the devil lurking in every human being. It is true as Heaven and Hell, as old as Eden, as new as Today.

But it was growing late; I had to return to the boat. I thanked Father Ragaru for the delightful time he had passed so quickly and reluctantly bade him good





LAY BROTHER AND PUPILS AT HOLY CROSS MISSION, ALSO THE OMNIPRESENT DOGS.



Figure 1 displays a 4x4 grid of 16 small images, likely representing different stages of a plant's growth or development. The images are arranged in four rows and four columns. The first row shows a seedling with two leaves. The second row shows a seedling with four leaves. The third row shows a seedling with eight leaves. The fourth row shows a seedling with sixteen leaves. The images are arranged in a grid that is 4 units wide and 4 units high.



night. On the way to the boat I happened to think that perhaps he would allow me to copy one of the myths which he had taken down, and I sent back to ask him if he would trust me with the book so that I might copy one before we left at dawn. He sent word that he had none translated which I would care for, but that as soon as he had taken some medicine to a sick Indian he would follow to the boat and read off a translation for me. The nights had grown dark, for the summer was ending. In a little while I could see moving lights and Father Ragaru, the lay-brother, and two Indian boys carrying lanterns came down to the rough bank and up into the captain's room where the lanterns supplemented the dim little swinging lamp. There, surrounded by the stillness of that lonely river, I took down this myth as the father translated it, literally, as I had requested, so that it has lost none of the quaintness of the original, though it has lost the expressive shrugs and grimaces of the Frenchman. Father Ragaru agrees with me that the legend embodies the universal idea of the immaculate conception held by most peoples with regard to their gods or good spirits. It is a trifle ambiguous in places, but I preferred to leave the story as it was told. "They say" is as common among the Tinnehs, by the way, as *on dit* among the French. This, one of their most ancient myths, pertains to

#### THE CROW

One day, they say, there was a large village, many people. There was also a large house and there, outside the door, at the right side, something was thrown. What does it cover (or hide)? People were lounging about when all suddenly the sun disappeared and it became dark. People walked about with torches.

What to do then? And it continued to be dark.



Then an old woman said thus: "Where is he who will bring back the sun to us?" But who, *who* will do it? The one who can do it is not." Then the people brought many gifts to that which lay upon the ground. "In exchange for this go fly for us to the sun." But no (with the Frenchman's shrug), he did not even move. For that reason they took back everything. "But what can we give to him?" they ask also. "We will kill for you two dogs." Then it began to move. "Aha," said he.

They fed him with grease. They fattened the dogs and boiled them. Then he came from the dark place where he was and began to fly. And he flew (he has not decided where he is going), whence will he fly? Then he perceived some light and from that dark place he flew and kept on flying. Toward a village he flew and soared. Then a nice woman, pleasing to the eye, came down to the river to get water. From a little hole she took water and drank. Then It became a twig and fell into the cup. She tried indeed to push it aside without success. It continued to reappear in the cup. Finally with That in the cup she drank. She went back up to the village and entered the house. When the time came she bore a child. And the baby began to walk and was clinging to everything, and he took a little package from under his mother's pillow. Then he looked in the corner of the house and he saw the sun. He took it, went into the middle of the house. He began to roll it toward the entrance (house approached by a tunnel). His mother went and got it and put it back into the corner. Then the child began to cry. "Be quiet," said his mother, but he continued to cry. "Stop crying," said his uncle (he had no father), but he cried the harder. Another of his uncles said, "You want the sun? It is there" (pointing to



it), and the child stopped crying but sobbed. The mother took the sun and gave it to the child. He began again to handle it like a ball and to make it roll toward the entrance. After him she went, she placed the child outside the entrance and beyond the tunnel. And the child became a crow and flew with the sun toward his house and he gave it back to the people. And it began to be daylight. "Thanks," said they to him. And afterward this crow to the entrance went back. And again they covered him with the fur.

Kot-a (*That's all*. The Tinnehs invariably end their stories thus).



## CHAPTER IX

### ANVIK AND INDIAN DEATH CUSTOMS

What a pity that the brain's camera obscura has no spring, pressing which would open to others' view the beautiful pictures which Memory has "fixed" upon the sensitized plates. A pity to hide them in the dark room of one's own head when, could they be hung, each in its proper frame of circumstance and under the light of its own day, many could share the pleasure. Let me try to show you Anvik, taken one summer afternoon as, all unaware, she lay dreamily by the river. Photographer Eye drew his curtain, focused his lens, and the picture was instantaneously reproduced, in vivid colors and with moving figures and changing expressions, like some marvelous, full-sized cinemetograph. One can even *hear* in my picture, the droning of insects, the bark of a dog, the purl of the water, the laugh of a little child. I received the proof afterward but the picture could not be improved. Memory fixed it and it has never faded.

In the foreground the turbid Yukon hurries by. It has been to Anvik so often that it does not even take time to run up into the little slough today, having important business on the coast, 457 miles away. Look across the broad water. See the Anvik River coming, beautifully blue, and quiet, and clear, shaming the sandy Yukon's vulgar haste and devotion to commerce. But like many another youth's, its purity is largely a matter of environment. Its mother is a mountain lake, and the Anvik roams among the peace-





THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH AT ARVIK.



1940 1941  
1942 1943  
1944 1945



ful hills, fed by the untraveled snows, and anxious about nothing. But it longs to know life. See it mingling there with the very river it despised. Instantly its purity is sullied, now it is utterly lost, for the Anvik is "in the swim."

For background we have the hills covered densely with firs standing very straight, with their boughs so close and short that the trees resemble hop vines climbing their tall poles, or the close-clipped trees of a Noah's ark. The sky is a great turquoise and the banks are emeralds. Summer is so short in Alaska that the greens, always that of early spring, vivid and unfading. Down on the shore cuddles the little Indian village, with tents for those who will not live indoors. Upon the racks the silver sides of the salmon gleam. Across the little slough, now almost dry, lies a log to bridge it, and the canoes are drawn up. Upon the little slope on the other side cluster the buildings of the Episcopal mission, and at its top is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Chapman, pretty and comfortable, and regarded as palatial by the Indians. The mission owns a little sawmill, which is leased to the traders, so that the buildings are of lumber instead of logs, almost the only ones in the Yukon. Note, too, the little porch, positively the only such architectural adornment I saw. Double poppies blazed along the walk like torch-bearing lackeys to light us to the door, and riotous sweet peas clambered about the porch as if anxious for that vantage ground to the lovely view which stretched far and wide. I have done my poor best, but I cannot make you see it all. The picture hangs, after all, in my own gallery, and cannot be yours.

Mr. Chapman had come down to the boat to meet us and to conduct us to his pretty little Northern home



where Mrs. Chapman received us cordially. Pictures, books, womanly knick-knacks—oh, it was so home-like. Only the double windows and the packed space of eight inches between walls suggested the shut-in winters. "Yes, we really enjoy living here," the wife said. "The Indians are affectionate and grateful and we trust them thoroughly. Why, Mr. Chapman went down the Kuskokwim valley last winter with no other company than one Indian. They traveled 700 miles and were lost for several days in the mountains. They suffered a great deal, so much so that although they were gone but a few weeks, Mr. Chapman was so altered by exposure and privation that I didn't recognize him when he came home. At any time that Indian might have robbed and abandoned my husband, who was ill, and might himself have returned; but instead he took the best care of Mr. Chapman."

Anvik is an old Indian village and the best place on the river for curios, although the Indians there are beginning to charge big prices since a San Francisco florist sent an order, last summer, for a thousand birch baskets for his trade. He could, of course, have obtained them much nearer home, but I suppose he thought they'd be an attraction, since everybody was talking Alaska. Mrs. Chapman had many odd things scattered about, gifts of their parishioners, so to speak. She gave me a wooden dish set with blue beads at intervals along the edge. Here are made many of the curious rain-coats worn both by Eskimo and Indians to protect their fur parkas. They are made of strips of seal intestines a few inches wide, sewed neatly in double seams with a vegetable fiber. The hoods and wrists draw up by strings of the same and the bottom of this Arctic mackintosh is strengthened by a narrow border of seal skin with the hair on.



When dry this garment is stiff like parchment, but when wet it is as soft and pliable as silk. It weighs but a few ounces, is waterproof and durable. See an Eskimo wearing one of these raincoats and emerging from the hole of his skin kiak and he looks all of a piece with his boat, like some novel aquatic animal.

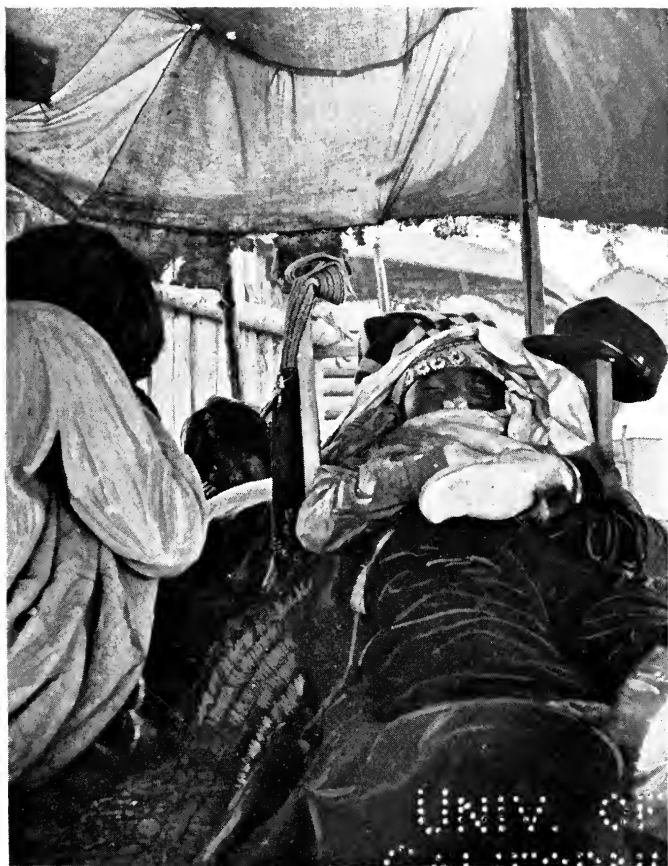
Last year this mission had thirty-six pupils. It is very well equipped. You can see the carpenter shop just beyond the little church. There are paneled doors and a bell, too, in this Indian temple. It was vacation, but I went over to see the girls' school quarters and a few of the pupils who had remained. The school room walls were almost covered with colored pictures of animals which strongly resembled circus bills, and the girls were extremely proud of being able to name all the strange beasts. None of them had ever seen a horse. Off the school room was a neat little kitchen, where the girls were preparing a meal. Miss Sabine, the teacher, is from Philadelphia. She says the Indian girls are very bright, docile and lovable, much more easily governed and quite as easily taught as white girls of their ages. I saw a little type-written notice on the wall: "No tardy pupil will be allowed to compete in any fig or cracker contest on the day of the delinquency." Isn't that too funny? It seems Mr. Chapman often comes in for an informal quiz, his pockets furnished with these dainties for rewards of merit. But the idea of the Indian, who has always held that "Time was made for slaves," held to the stroke of a clock, struck me as oddly as seeing a cat, one day, performing in a circus. Think of lazy, luxurious, pampered Pussy's having to work for a living! Native parents living in filth across the slough of Ignorance yonder, serve on the school committee. It is a very sensible idea, designed not only to obtain,



by a very innocent flattery, the hearty coöperation of the parents in the work of the mission, but to place them in their rightful position of authority, even though their children's knowledge may outstrip their own. Then I'll tell you a third thing that was unexpected. "Look behind the door," said Miss Sabine. "It isn't!" exclaimed I. "It is," replied she. And it was; a telephone, the only one in Alaska. It was put up by a friend for Mr. Chapman and communicates with other buildings so that in severe weather trifles may be referred to Mr. Chapman without going about. Miss Sabine took me into her pretty little room with its mission-made dresser and queer little contrivances. Were she stranded upon the North pole and not expecting another human being during her natural life, you would find that a woman, did you blunder upon her, had draped the pole with her sash, spread a white bear skin rug, grouped some small icebergs artistically for furniture, had at least one photograph sticking into a crack, and had contrived to save from the wreck a sheet, her handglass and toothbrush, a napkin, hatpin and some hairpins. The sheet would be hung for a curtain, the toilet articles would be lying on an ice-marble washstand, she would have gathered snow for her bath and arranged a porch. The hairpins would serve as tools and implements for all uses and the hatpin to supplement them and as a weapon of defense from always expected mice. When you found her she would very probably be repairing her only gown in some occult way, but her hair would be "done up" and her hands clean, that is certain. How different with men, even men who pass for particular at home. You should see them and their rooms in Alaska!

I heard that a dead boy was lying in the Indian village, however, and I hurried across the slough on





DEAD BOY AT ANVIK



THE  
CITY OF  
NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE  
COMMISSIONER OF  
THE LAND OFFICE  
ALBANY, N. Y.  
JANUARY 1, 1892



a log. I am no lumberman and should have fallen into dense "Ignorance" had it not been for the helping hand of Bishop Rowe, who performed the highly ministerial act of placing my feet upon firm ground. Such a young and pleasant face has he, a cheery voice and a manner bearing no trace of "I am holier than thou." Bishop Rowe's headquarters are at Sitka, but he was visiting the Yukon missions.

As I hurried along, I met Mr. Kjellman, who was arguing with a bear cub about the most feasible way to the boat. He said Captain Tuttle of the *Bear* wanted one for a mascot, and this was being pressed into the revenue service. It was a pretty little thing, but had lost one of its claws and maimed another in the trap which captured it. I left them to argue it out and hurried along.

As is the Indian custom, the corpse was not in the house, but was under a tent roof in a sort of booth next it. The dead boy was upon the ground in a half sitting position. The head was wound with a bandana handkerchief of which, in life, he had been very proud. Around his neck and covering the mouth and chin was a cotton muffler. He was dressed in a woolen shirt and trousers; the feet that would walk no more were in clumsy mukluks, and the still hands were cold in spite of their heavy buckskin mittens. All his belongings were grouped about him. His tawdry scarlet cap hung beside the head whose covering would soon be of sod, and an Indian bag was at the other side. The lad's parents were evidently people of wealth, for another suit of clothes, folded, was lying at his feet. At one side was a stick about a yard high, and upon it a candle. The face haunts me. The eyes were closed and the nostrils were filled with cotton. He had been perfectly well and had died of a hemorrhage,



so that the body was not wasted, and the face had none of the pallor we associate with death. His immovableness seemed an appalling deception. The sun streamed in on all sides, and a dusty beam fell directly across the eyes of the bronze statue, which, but three days before, had been a rollicking boy. "Of death it has been said that nothing is more certain than that it will come, and nothing more uncertain than when it will come." I felt as if I must shield the dead face from the prying beam which sought out the secret in the close-shut eyes.

The booth was filled with the women and children of the village who had come to mourn with those that mourned. There was not the slightest fear among even the little ones of the stretched-out figure which lay among them so horribly motionless and still. As their weird wailing filled the air, I alone seemed to feel it was a death chamber. His mother had flung herself prone upon the ground, poor thing, and I needed no lexicon to translate her broken words and wails. An old woman, probably his grandmother, groveled in the dust near him, and would not raise her face. Some of the women worked as they wailed, one of these was grinding snuff with a wooden mortar and pestle which had evidently been used for generations, as both were much worn and blackened. This snuff is a disgusting compound of tobacco which has been chewed and then dried and ground with the nicotine dug from pipes. In some parts of Alaska, snuff is made from tobacco, alder bark, willow ashes, and sugar. At Holy Cross I saw a couple of Indians carrying a number of the fungi which we children used to call brackets. When I asked them what they were going to do with them they said, grind them into their snuff. This snuff doesn't sound appetizing,



but it must be, for men, women and children use it. The woman was grinding in the mortar. She was not beautiful, but as my dear mother used to say, "Neither are you, dear. We can't all be beautiful, but we can all be good." It is therefore to be hoped that this creature is as good as she is *not* beautiful! By the way, was there ever a nation in any time or any clime that knew not the mortar and the pestle? The Bible says in the days of Solomon, "Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar, yet would not his foolishness depart from him," and Solomon is as right for the nineteenth century fool as for the man who incited his remark.

It is the Indian custom to provide food for all the mourners, so that it is not all sympathy that induces a large and steady attendance. Father Ragaru told me that an Indian requested him to bury the body right away, as he could no longer feed the people. He had sat up all night cooking slapjacks for the mourners. There are no ceremonies at the grave. The rude coffins are laid atop the ground and piled with rocks and logs or lumber. One grave I saw, and it was a little one, had a canopy of white drill over it, fastened to four rude posts, which had been laboriously stained red with some juice. Poor mother, poor Indian mother, did you think to shield your child from burning sun and pelting rain with that? to keep him warm 'mid ice and snows with *that*? Yet the little white canopy serves you well, for it represents love, a mother's love, and even a mightier, which has wrapped your baby round about forevermore.

The family mask is usually nailed upon a post above the grave, as we cut the name upon the marble of our vaults. Mr. Kjellman told me that down on the Kuskokwim the Indians stand above their graves



effigies of the departed carved from logs, life-size or even larger, sometimes with two faces, as if one looked upon this world and one out to the next, the quiet sleeper below having tasted of both. The Indians are spirited carvers and as these monuments are colored, the effect is often startling indeed. Some of them bear threatening spears, some wear fearful masks, and to come suddenly upon a lonely graveyard guarded by these hideous things is enough to make the stoutest heart leap and to hurry the steps of the least superstitious. As for me and my nerves, we should shriek with terror.

The Indians bury with the corpse, or place upon the grave, all belongings of the deceased. I have often looked curiously upon the motley and pitiful objects, rusty kettles, wooden dishes, braided baskets, knives, even the beloved shotgun, than which no Indian can conceive anything more to be desired. One day I saw upon a lonely mountain-side a grave above which stood a high pole with a rifle nailed to it and my heart warmed toward the "barbarians" who had made that sacrifice to their dead. Go to Greenwood, over what tomb can you find a woman's diamond necklace hanging? upon which, the mortgages held by a man? And if these things were buried with them, how long, think you, would their valuables remain with the dead, the powerless dead? Near Nulato, I saw a grave alone by the river upon the mountain-side over which shone, I choose the word, a bright red blanket. How grateful it would have been to those left in this world's cold! But the blanket was his and he would need it upon his long, solitary journey. What *Indian* would rob the dead? It is notable that when anything ever is removed from a grave, it is by a white or at his instigation, though he would be apt to suffer if it were



known. A man who has lived long in Alaska told me that even an "enlightened" Indian would not dare to actually steal from a grave, but will sometimes "trade." In such a case he always speaks aloud that the spirit may hear. "Take this rifle, this just as good for you," and he will lay an old one upon the grave and take the better one. This man was very desirous of a very ancient and beautiful ivory knife that lay upon an Eskimo grave, so he gave a big butcher-knife, much more valuable in their estimation, to a native, and requested him to conduct negotiations with the deceased. In a few minutes the Eskimo returned. "Well, did you make the deal?" was the irreverent question. "Yes, got ivory knife, but no give iron knife. He need not sharp knife. Give him some stones. He say nothing." Well, I think I'd have said something, if I *had* been dead, at such a bare-faced imposition as that. Speaking of Eskimo reminds me of the funniest thing I ever heard in connection with the solemn subject of death. Dr. Briggs is stationed at Point Hope, and is much respected by the natives. He attended one, a man, and left some medicine for his use. He heard no more of it, and while walking some weeks after, he met the funeral procession of the Eskimo. His widow had it linger till she had thanked the doctor for his kindness. She asserted that the medicine had relieved her husband wonderfully, in proof of which she showed the corpse with the bottle, as a mark of gratitude, in his stiffened hand. I don't know Dr. Briggs, but I should much like to make his acquaintance, if for no other reason than to inquire of him how the humor of that occasion struck him. Dr. Briggs had another innocently ironical remark made to him one day. He had given an Eskimo some powders four months before, and hap-



pening to meet the man, he asked him if they had cured him. Oh yes, indeed they had, and the pain had not returned. "Very good powders, me not lost them," and in proof of his care he showed the treasured powders, not one missing, to the doctor. Here we have a similar to the historic case of pins saving a life by not swallowing them, a corroboration, as it were. Would that these negative examples might be more generally followed. But setting the effects of "before taking" and "after taking" Dr. Briggs' medicine over against each other, as in these two cases related, is it not a practical joke on a really good physician?

Do the Alaskan Indians really mourn their dead? I have heard it affirmed and denied with equal insistence by people who have lived long among them. Some say that they are very fond of one another living, but that death ends all, that as soon as the body is put away, so is memory, and that the wailing is perfunctory. Near Holy Cross a baby was buried above ground, but covered only by birchbark instead of logs, and the voracious dogs ate the little body as, surely, the mother must have known they would. And yet, recalling their kindness to their children and love for them living, I cannot think they are not really mourned. Mr. Kjellman told me that at Port Clarence he knew an Eskimo and his wife who visited their little child's grave every day, but that is evidently an exception upon the other side.

An Indian widow cuts off her hair and must wail a certain time every day for a year, during which twelve-month she may not marry again. I have several times seen a widow doing up her daily wailing as she would her hair, or rather as we would. Still, that's no more ludicrous than to see the careful changes rung on the mourning of many a widow you and I know, mourn-



ing taken out in crepe, and shaded with nicety from heavy black to lighter, then through lavender into white, by almost imperceptible advances which require real thought. The American's year is now ended and she bursts into bloom. Yes, human nature is much the same the wide world over.

Among the Indians still addicted to their peculiar customs, when sickness comes the diseased are first treated by the women, who have considerable knowledge of herbs; but if these do not cure, the Shaman is called in. And then it would appear to be a forlorn hope, for it's much like calling the priest to administer extreme unction. The patient feels he's expected to die, and in common decency he ought to. Besides, the Shamans make such an unearthly din exorcising the evil spirits and invoking the good ones, that the exhausted sufferer gladly flies the scene. The Shaman sometimes wears a hideous mask and carries a fantastic rattle. But dear me, we have only to go back to the sixteenth century to find that our ancestors were just as ridiculous. Read:

"A leather mask covering the head and neck and simulating a bird's head with its round eye and long beak, the eye of crystal, the beak a long nose filled with odoriferous substance, the mask tipped with a hat like an ecclesiastic's and continuing down to the level of the shoulders, a child's dress falling to the ankles, the hands lost to view in enormous gloves; in the right hand a long rod; the mask, the robe and the gloves are of Levant morocco—in such a rig as this our fathers were accustomed to visit pest-houses."

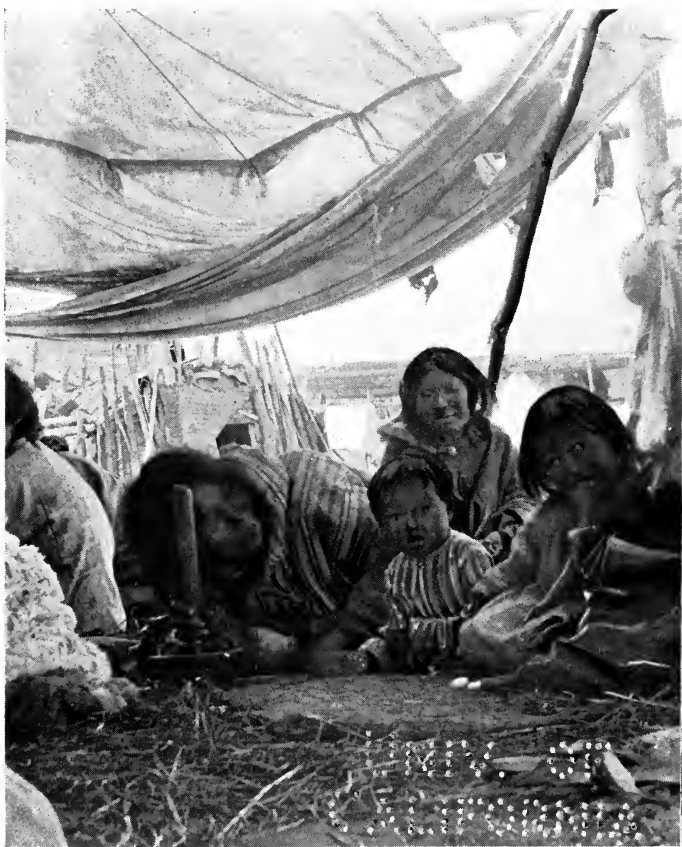
When it is plain that the sufferer must die, he is carried without the house, as his death within it would bring ill-luck upon both house and surviving occupants. There, under the open sky, no matter how bitter the weather, he breathes back to God the breath



with which he was made a living spirit. Several years ago, a man I knew went to Kokrine's, 800 miles up the Yukon. The thermometer registered 60° below zero and a searching wind blew. He saw some Indians carrying an old woman on a board from a house and, being then new to the country, supposed she was dead; but as they passed him, the poor thing turned up her eyes, suffering, but not protesting. She herself had carried out the dying to expire alone, now her time was come. When she turned her patient eyes upon the stranger he stopped the bearers and insisted that she be taken under cover. They protested, but he compelled them. He found the woman was simply starving, and fed her wisely till the poor thing rallied her Indian strength, and in a week was well. The man went further down the river and shortly returned to find the woman lying, frozen stiff, upon a cache. It seems that after his departure the Indians visited their rabbit snares for three or four days consecutively and found nothing in them. It was plain that the woman was a witch. She had recovered when by rights she should have died, and now she was in some occult manner eating the village's rabbits, hide, hair, and bones. So they took the poor thing, the feeble old witch whose enchantments were no protection to her, laid her upon a cache and told her to die. The cold showed the pity her kinsmen did not, and extinguished the life-fire which required too much fuel from the tribe's scanty store.

It is hard to connect such cruel things with the Yukon Indians, for the Tinnehs are kind and affectionate toward one another, readily share their food with friend or stranger, very seldom quarrel and never fight except when mad with quass, not often then; and a vindictive spirit is almost unknown among them.





MOURNERS AT ANVIK.



THE  
AMERICAN  
MUSEUM OF  
NATURAL HISTORY



In their justification be it said that these are ancient tribal customs; that they are a grossly superstitious people; that their frequent lack of food necessitates a survival of the fittest; that they have not the slightest fear of death, accepting it, as we all should, as a natural occurrence, natural as being born. They have very little idea of the future, and, to tell the truth, very little interest in it. They follow the instruction of the poet:

“Worry not over the future, present is all thou hast,  
For the future will soon be present, and the present will  
soon be past.”

It was at Kokrine's, too, that a dreadful thing was done about ten years ago. A man died, as was supposed, and was buried in a shallow grave. It proved to be only a trance. He wakened at night, and, being big and strong, threw the clods from him and returned to his home. But the villagers were angry, probably considering there was something uncanny, if not devilish, about the affair. “You are dead,” said they indignantly, “you know you are. How dare you come back after you have been properly buried? You come back and stay dead.” And they dragged the man to his empty grave, fastened him down with stakes, covered him a second time with earth, and left him to suffocate. Yet it will not do for us to judge these ignorant Indians. Just as dreadful things happen daily and nightly in our great cities, and not long ago, people were immured alive in the very name of the God of love and mercy. Who will be judge? The best of us may not even dare to sit upon the jury.



## CHAPTER X

### NULATO, 648 MILES FROM ST. MICHAEL

It is so peaceful now, not to say dead, that a massacre is the last thing one would connect with the sleepy little Indian village and the good-natured, child-like inhabitants. Yet forty years ago, for Nulato is ancient as Alaskan settlements go, all the whites were murdered here, among them Barnard, an Englishman, who had come over from the Mackenzie River and was wintering at Nulato. He was one of the relief party sent out to discover the survivors of the ill-fated Sir John Franklin expedition. It had been reported that Barnard left a half-breed child at Nulato, and his family in England wished the matter inquired into that she might be cared for, were it true. Mr. Ogilvie, when at Nulato with us, found that it was impossible the woman who had passed as Barnard's daughter could be his, and so reported to the family in England.

For many years Nulato has been a notable trading post. Every year the natives along the Arctic ocean come down the Kowak and the Koyukuk rivers bringing northern products to barter with the Yukon Indians. A high bluff rises at one side of the little creek and at its foot the mud shelves down to the water like slate. It must have quicksand in it, for I sank at once in the firm looking place to the tops of my shoes, and should be sticking there still if it had not been for the very man I had been laughing at not long before.



He burned my front hair short with his coals of fire. It happened this way. The young Nova Scotian thought he'd try canoeing, and one of the Indians grinningly loaned his tippy craft. The result was what we all expected, only quicker, and everybody laughed immoderately when he splashed about in the water. But why should he go down and come up so queerly? It never occurred to anybody that a man who could not swim would have been so foolhardy as to essay a birchbark canoe. An Indian noticed his struggles, held out a paddle and pulled him ashore, all but drowned before our laughing eyes. He was the most mortified man I ever saw. "I can't imagine how it happened," he said to me, "why, when nothing but a boy, I carried dispatches for the Canadian government in dug-outs on the Saskatchewan, during the Riel Rebellion, and everybody knows that dug-outs are as much harder to manage than canoes—" and he paused in disgust. I was never in a dug-out in my life, but I sagely assured him that anybody who could keep in one long enough to seize his paddle would be justified in considering a birchbark canoe as tame as a sand scow on a canal. I finally succeeded in righting myself and making him feel better, but to think it must be he who was to save me from a muddy grave! However, I too had made myself ridiculous, and he was comforted. It is a remarkable thing, by the way, that none of these Northern Indians can swim, unless they have been taught by whites, although they all but live upon the water. One who fell from our boat was drowned.

On the other side of the little creek, Nulato has straggled up the bank, and sits exhausted. The Indians are the homeliest in the whole region. One of them, either boy or man, was a genuine gnome, and would



have been seized upon by Kiralfy as a leading attraction. The creature was a terribly deformed, misshapen dwarf, but had not an unhappy face, for, unlike most barbarians, the Tinnehs are very kind to those so afflicted, and seem to regard them in the light of mascots instead of hoodoos. A miner told me of a freak, a perfect monster, which was born up the Tanana, and lived for several years. The people there were very poor, but nothing was denied the awful idiot, whose barking voice really ruled the settlement. The miner often tried to persuade its mother to bring her dreadful progeny to the States to exhibit, and explained how very rich she and all her people would become, but she would not even hear of it. The thing died about three years ago.

This is Half-Past-Leven, a partial paralytic, who will never grow any bigger, poor boy. I should like to see his face should my picture reach him. I bought the showiest frame I could find to enclose it. He will be the envied of his tribe. It occurred to me that the little cripple had probably never looked into a glass, and would not recognize his own cheery face, so I sent with the picture a pocket mirror. Half-Past-Leven was named by Captain Barr, who spent his first winter in Alaska under a bluff near here, frozen into the Yukon behind a dam he built to protect the boat. Dinner was served at 12 o'clock; the little cripple soon discovered that. Thereafter, at half-past eleven to the minute, as if he limped by clockwork, he came aboard. You will be surprised to hear that at Nulato I met Mrs. Langtry, Mary Anderson, Mrs. James Brown Potter, and other famous beauties. The ladies were notable as contrasts rather than resemblances to the celebrities whose names they bore.

The village women were wailing beside the body of





LITTLE "HALF-PAST ELEVEN,"







a pilot's wife. The rude pine coffin, covered with red and white striped drill, lay upon the ground in a booth just outside the house. Upon the gaudy pall stood the dead woman's belongings, showing her to have been, judged by native standards, a rich woman. These were a common cup and saucer, one metal spoon, some cheesecloth, a tin dish and a can of condensed milk. Her husband, further to impress the envious mourners, had also laid upon the coffin an adz, a large augur, some bits of board surmounted by a saw, and an accordion. I was accustomed to broken columns of flowers, sickles, lyres. These, though less beautiful, expressed the same ideas, work and music ended, no more hunger and thirst, nor need of apparel. At the end of the coffin stood a little shrine made of wood covered with red flannel and draped with mosquito net. It had evidently been fashioned after one in the Catholic chapel. Nothing stood within, yet if God takes pleasure in graven images He could imagine one enshrined within the little niche made with so much care. And this woman, this Indian, was a lowly part of the universal motherhood expressed by Mary, and her dusky baby in the primitive hammock over there, as beloved of the Christ-child as any golden-haired, lily-faced darling of fortune.

Near the shrine stood the wonder of the hamlet, a small cheap clock. There was something awful in its persistent ticking just over the heart whose regular beats had forever ceased. Silently the clock's hands pointed to the hours which remained to us, the quick, while the dead, with her motionless hands folded idly forevermore, had finished her hours, and had already forgotten that slight incident of eternity, Time. The human tongue had spoken its last word, but the clock's swung and sung:



Yet time for you, Eternity for her, tick, tick;  
See Time fly from you, Eternity draw nigh to you;  
Tick, tick, five minutes nigher now, tick-tick;  
You've spent Time by a half-hour since you came, tick, tick,  
Eternity's gained on you half an hour, tick, tick.

Would nothing hush that dreadful clock? I looked around upon the stolid faces of the mourners; no message for them in that monotonous warning, but one to me, one to me.

Just beside the coffin, quite regardless of the glories of her bright plaid shawl and new print apron, one of the women had flung herself in very real grief. I felt shaken and intrusive, and placing upon the coffin a cheap little gold-banded mug I had brought to give to some child, I hastily left the booth. It was stood beside the empty shrine, a curious resting place for a toy I had thoughtlessly bought thousands of miles away.

Think of living and dying in Nulato, knowing only such squalid homes as these! I tried to "take" two of the inhabitants beside their den, but you'd have thought it the Devil to take them. They rushed inside, flung themselves in terror upon the ground, and fairly burrowed their faces in the greasy dust.

One was not afraid, having been at a mission school, as seen by her attire. I was really taking the house, which is one of the mansions of Nulato. You can imagine what the hovels would be.

The girl appeared to be holding her nose, but it must have been a trick of the camera, for that a Yukon Indian could be driven to such an extreme by any smell extant is inconceivable; the foulest would be accepted quite as a matter of course. A breath from the worst of slums in the States would greet their olfactories like a whiff of violets, while they would use iodoform for sachet powder, did they understand perfumes.





A NULATO MANSION



[illegible]



Yet of one who was born at Nulato nobody on the Yukon speaks aught but praise. She was the child of a full-blooded squaw and a white father, and she married a white trader. She is a fine-looking woman, a thorough lady in manners, possessing a quick intelligence, well trained. She is greatly interested in the strange folklore of her country, and has collected a fund of information most valuable to the ethnologist and anthropologist. It was she who told this story of a barbarian Romeo and Juliet, and vouches for its truth, though she herself does not understand why the woman did not elope instead. Perhaps even a squaw possesses her own ideas of romance. When the story-teller was a little girl at Nulato, an Indian woman fell sick there. Heartsickness was the prime ailment. She loved her husband's brother and her passion was returned. Many Indians possess the power of throwing themselves into a sort of catalytic state, or at any rate of feigning death for hours, so perfectly that the deception cannot be detected by the unskilled. The guilty wife and her lover decided that she should die—to the village—and take advantage of the tribal superstition which forbade anyone's visiting a grave or putting foot within a prescribed distance in all directions from the corpse. At that time the dead were not buried, simply laid in rough boxes which admitted air, and placed atop the ground, covered only with leaves. So this Indian Juliet closed the dark eyes which had striven to betray her secret, heard the preparations for her own burial, listened to the wailing of the mourners which drowned what seemed to her the audible beating of her tempestuous heart, and assumed the peace which had deserted her. She was borne without the camp and left to her death-loneliness, so her people thought. Now began the curious absences of her husband's dis-



loyal brother. When questioned he would reply that he went hunting, or make other excuses which at last aroused the suspicion of the husband, who one night followed him. As the betrayed approached the vicinity of the lonely grave he heard a song, and shook with fright, for the voice was that of his wife. He would have rushed to the grave but dared not step within the deadline. Then he saw the faithless woman. Yes, it was she, no restless wraith whose death-house might not be visited. He rushed toward the cowering creature and buried his knife in the heart that had mocked him. Without a word she fell across her cozened coffin, and slowly sank into it, her life-blood redyeing the rude box whose funeral red had faded under the rains. Her glazing eyes turned upon the narrow house, narrow even for an Indian, and closed upon its mockery. "Ha," gibed the coffin, "you thought to cheat me as you did your husband, did you? You fled his bed and thought to desert mine. Fool, fool! But a moment ago your song broke the stillness which should reign around me, but your blood flows noiselessly enough. Ay, you'll gad no more. This coffin was built for you after all, and your lover will know it soon." So the wretched woman heard no love words that night, only the hiss of her husband's hot rage as it struck her cold horror, only the jeers of the coffin she had scorned. Poor thing, she paid for her heart, with her heart, and wiped off the score with her blood.

This power of becoming seemingly unconscious is an exasperating trick of Tinneh Indians. If one feels himself abused or offended or insulted, he is apt to "go into a fit." One of the traders has an Indian wife who employed this novel retaliation if anything happened to vex her. He stood it for some time, but one day when a miner rushed into the store and reported



that Kate was dying, he grimly said that he'd revive her, and doused an entire bucket of cold water into her face. She has never had an attack since, for he informed her then that it was the most efficacious thing he had ever tried for her peculiar ailment, and that he should employ it in any future attacks she might have.

The mingling of native's and white's attire is odd. I saw one young fellow whose waist measure was not more than thirty-two, wearing a pair of overalls conspicuously marked forty-six inches. He had lapped them around him till they would have fitted a couple of corkscrews beautifully, but were rather bias and hampering to straight legs. I suppose that size happened to be on top and the trader told the Indian to "take those or git," for the natives are not indulged in reveries over goods. Money is no medium of exchange in Alaska. It is all barter. The Indians bring pelts, fish, fresh and dried, berries, mukluks, etc., and take away tobacco, sugar, drill, overalls, caps and flour. As there are no bags, they carry sugar, etc., in their hats or parkas. Sometimes an Indian will buy a pair of overalls, tie a leg at the bottom, dump in flour, tie another knot and put in tobacco, and so fill one leg or both, surely a unique shopping bag. About Nulato they had very well made birch baskets with willow sewed around the top to strengthen them, and gussets at the side. I saw some very nice hereditary dishes, too. They are of wood turned richly dark, and they are set with ivory or shell in diamonds around the top.

I never think of Nulato without recalling a man who is that unhappy thing, one struggling bravely with a work whose efficacy he doubts, whose results he cannot see. He is a priest from the celebrated and ancient Scotch family of the Munros, who fought in France and settled there at Lyons and Paris long ago. He has



been in Alaska several years, but cannot speak a word of the difficult Tinneh language. His confrères have been removed, and when I saw him he was living entirely alone in the log house chinked with reindeer moss, doing his own work, cooking his own food, and attending the little vegetable garden, as well as carrying on his pastoral work. It was almost impossible, said Father Munro, to obtain help from the Indians even if they were paid well. Poor little Half-Past-Leven was his main dependence, a broken reed that, surely. He looked forlorn as he sat in the cheerless mission house, the sole white man in Nulato, scholarly, traveled, but lonely and discouraged. He said that the Indians there lacked affection and gratitude, that their pretended love for one another was hypocrisy, that he had gone to administer the sacrament to the dying when he was refused a fire for the sufferer or the least assistance. To be sure the natives hasten to make peace after quarreling, but it is only because they so dread gossip, which is rife among them. He told me of a woman who had lately committed suicide because her children had announced, "I tell about you." He took us into the primitive little chapel. A rug of barbaric hues lay upon the clean floor, and beside the altar hung an olive wood cross with the fourteen stations marked by pearl discs and relics of each place. This had been sent from far away Jerusalem the Golden to this squalid Indian village in memory of the One who commanded "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." But no wonder the priest was discouraged, almost dismayed:

"For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men but unto God: for no man understandeth him." "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" "So



likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air" . . . . "therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me." "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth but my understanding is unfruitful." "Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For verily thou givest thanks well, but the other is not edified."

I think that men are men the world over, and that differences, no matter how great, are generally but externals. If you can master a man's speech, can think *in* it, you will think his thoughts *with* it, at least to a degree. Frank Hamilton Cushing, who lived among the Zunis, spoke their language, studied their ancient lore and arts, and was admitted to their secret societies, told me that the way he had learned to tie and untie their curious and intricate knots and to restore ancient designs, was to sit perfectly still, absorbingly contemplating them. Then he would trace them with his eye, strive to follow the thought of the doer, centuries dead. At last he would find himself in that doer's mood, his fingers would respond to the 'old idea, and involuntarily would move to carry out that idea. It is a strangely significant thought. Father Munro speaks English, even, with an effort, and the Indians pick up only that or Russian. How hard it must be to deny one's self so much and feel that the sacrifice meets so little recompense.

Dr. Jackson gave Father Munro some blanks to fill for the Department of Agriculture at Washington, who in this way are compiling data which may prove of use. But our governmental methods in such things



seem so crude and so niggardly. This reminds me of Funston, a botanist sent from Washington, and a son of Congressman Funston of Kansas. He came into the Yukon country, gathered specimens and took photographs, and lost them all and his outfit by the upsetting of a boat. Discouraged, he traveled a thousand miles, and returned to the States by the *Bear*. He is now, they say, general of artillery in heroic Cuba.

The point I have spoken of as the spot where the *Weare* first wintered has been named Kennicott Bluff after the distinguished young naturalist, who died at Nulato more than thirty years ago. His father, John A., was a physician and eminent horticulturalist, and their beautiful estate, "The Grove," just outside Chicago, was a rallying point for scientists for years. As a boy, Robert was very delicate, but the out-of-door life his tastes fostered strengthened him and before he was eighteen his attainments as a naturalist attracted attention. He did work for the Smithsonian at Washington, and at twenty-one he became one of the organizers of the Chicago Academy of Sciences. From then until his early death he made its advance one of the main objects of his life. He was successful in his profession from the start, and it was in '59 that he undertook his first Arctic expedition to obtain eggs of the many species of birds, especially water birds, breeding in the North, to study the zoölogy of that almost unknown region, and its geology. So, under the auspices of the Smithsonian, the Audubon Society of Chicago, and private parties, funds were provided for three years. The funds were devoted entirely to the expenses of collecting, etc., Kennicott accepted nothing for himself. The Hudson Bay Company and Sir George Simpson, governor, assisted him in every way, and Kennicott pushed for-



ward, up the Saskatchewan, down the Mackenzie to Peel's River, down the Porcupine to Fort Yukon. He bore every hardship cheerily, struck camp at ten o'clock at night and started at two in the morning, pushed through swamps, "losing pounds of blood to the mosquitoes," and endured terrific cold. This "delicate" man writes in his interesting journal, which was published among the "Transactions of the Chicago Academy of Sciences":

"We had to make a traverse of about fifty miles to Fort Resolution on the opposite side of the lake. We made eight or ten miles the same night and slept on the ice. A very strong wind made our camp very disagreeable and cold, and, of course, we had no camp fire, but I managed to erect a wall of snow, which afforded us a slight protection against the keen wind. The next day we walked about fourteen hours, exclusive of stoppages, making, I should think, nearly forty miles. . . . Here we got the only water to be had on the traverse, and having thawed some tongues and meat by carrying them under the breasts of our capots, made our dinner."

A delightful thing about his journal is that one is spared rhapsodies over scenery. Anent that he frankly says:

"I am sorry I do not appreciate fine scenery, else I would be able to describe some I see here (along the Porcupine). It inspires me with some elevating feelings to look upon these grand, rugged old Rocky Mountains, and I enjoy it, yet still I cannot remember the details of any scene that pleases me."

Kennicott spent his first Alaskan winter with Lockhart at Fort Yukon, and upon leaving gave his scientific books to Lockhart, whom he had thoroughly "enthused" over zoölogy. Kennicott was only twenty-four, jolly, hard-working, good company, but he seems to have inspired everyone about him with much of the absorbing love for science which was the mainspring of



his own life. This trait was remarked upon by R. J. Mendenhall of Minneapolis, who "hunted bugs" with Kennicott along the Great River of the North in 1857. Mr. Mendenhall said no one could be associated with him for a week without feeling that enthusiasm for scientific knowledge. At Fort Yukon, Kennicott gained quite a reputation among the Indians as a medicine man, and effected two cures upon natives supposed to be dying, by administering doses of tooth-powder.

Among the birds Kennicott noted about Nulato, was the pigeon-hawk, much prized by the Indians, and worth a marten skin to them. They used the feathers for ornament, also for the shafts of their arrows. Arrows are little used in the Yukon valley now. This pigeon-hawk has a curious habit of occupying the same nest year after year, and it isn't a fine home either, being loosely built of sticks and a little straw, upon the top of a high tree. Then there is the gray owl, which the Indians call the "heavy walker," it is so clumsy. This is prized as a delicacy by the old, but if a young person should eat of it he would soon age and die early. Of the hawk owl found at Nulato, Kennicott says: "I invariably found many tape-worms in the intestines of this bird; afterward, I discovered in the mouse, which is the usual food of these owls, the hydatid from which these parasites were developed." He also found here the Three-toed woodpecker and relates an odd reason for the dislike the Indians feel toward the bird: Many years ago, in time of famine, this woodpecker devoured his mate and wiped his claws on the back of his head; in proof of which, they point to the yellow mark of the "fat," which remains to this day. The ruffed grouse is not uncommon in the vicinity of Nulato. It feeds exclusively upon spruce buds so



that its flesh is aromatic with their flavor. When aimed at, it does not fly, but dodges behind the tree upon which it is sitting. There are plenty of sandpipers at Nulato, too, and pintail ducks, of which Kennicott says: "They fly more swiftly than any other duck, and are hard to hit on the wing. They grow so fat that they frequently cannot raise themselves above the water." Several birds of Alaska have been named from this famous young naturalist.

He made large collections of eggs and skins, taking copious notes, and returned to Chicago when the war broke out. He was dissuaded by his family from enlisting, and spent the winter of '62-3 at the Smithsonian putting his magnificent collection in shape and writing his papers for its publications. The scope and importance of his Arctic work were now everywhere acknowledged. His collections were extensive and were being constantly augmented by the many friends he had made among the company officials through Arctic America. These specimens were studied by specialists, and natural history gained a world of new facts.

"It was felt that that portion of these valuable collections which justly belonged to our Arctic explorer, ought to come to the city of his home, in accordance with his own desire and that of his friends, particularly as he had offered to relinquish his claim to the series to any institution in the city which would make proper provision for their reception and preservation. The matter was taken in hand by several prominent citizens of Chicago, and in a remarkably short space of time a fund was raised sufficient to comply with the conditions. News of the project reaching Professor Henry, that gentleman, with his accustomed liberality, offered to turn over not only Mr. Kennicott's share of the Arctic collections, but a series of all the duplicates of the Smithsonian Museum, in each department of natural history."



Mr. Kennicott was elected curator, then director and trustee of the academy. In 1865, he was sent to take command of a party destined to the survey of Alaska and the Yukon. In all this Mr. George C. Walker of Chicago showed himself what he always felt proud to be, Robert Kennicott's faithful friend. They were intimate till the latter's death.

Kennicott reached Nulato, but felt his strength failing. The day that he died he rose early and wrote full directions for the conduct of the explorations "*in case of any accident happening to me,*" then went out to walk, about four in the morning. As he did not return, they went to search for him. Something lay upon the beach. Yes, it was he, peacefully sleeping for aye, his face calm and happy, his keen eyes half closed. He had died, as he wished, at work, for beside him was his compass, and in the soft alluvium, lines indicating the mountains within sight, showing that when Death stayed the faithful hand he was working upon the map he was preparing of the region about Nulato. He gave his life to Science, who demands much and gives little, little except love for herself and the broad and broadening thoughts which she incites. Of the man himself she recks nothing, for she knows that another stands ready to take his place, no matter how unique the world thought him. "The workman dies, but the work goes on."

Kennicott was greatly beloved. His associates determined to send the body to the home that had been dear to him. The half-breed commander of the Russian post tore down the partition which separated his room from the common barracks, and gave the boards for a coffin. This was made double, and covered with cloth pitched with gum from the forest primeval, strengthened with brass. The body was taken to San



Francisco on the flagship *Nightingale*, and at Nulato near the spot where his body was found a cross was erected and a tablet bearing this inscription:

To the Memory  
of  
Robert Kennicott,  
Naturalist,  
Who Died Near This Place,  
May 13th, 1866,  
Aged Thirty.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE TANANA, MINOOK, AND THE RAPIDS

Above Nulato the mountains grow higher, bold rocks, bright colored as in Colorado, and purplish ones covered with lichen, vary the shore. Sometimes whole mountain sides are ablaze with fireweed. I supposed it so called because of its bright red color, but instead it springs up everywhere that fire has burned. It is an inflammation of the earth, so to speak.

About eighty miles above Nulato we stopped at a small Indian village, and I took little Serene ashore. Most of the population gathered around the little thing, and filing past her, slyly touched the fair silken curls. One of the children discovered that her eyes were blue. Evidently the idea was a new one. The dusky child glanced from one to another of her people. Beady black eyes looked back. She said something in Tinneh, and all looked curiously into Serene's eyes. They duly admired the lace-trimmed blue gown, and one of them spied the child's garters. Seeing they were curious, I showed them how the clamps work. But the dear little tot was, naturally, becoming restive under their admiring scrutiny, and we followed a woman who beckoned us. She led us to her house, which was built of birch poles only. Windows means wind-eyes. This domicile, it is needless to say, needed none. Strips of birch bark were laid upon the roof ready to be hung around the airy house if it rained, as one puts on the curtains of a carriage. The squaw ran into the hut, and brought out a duckling, which cuddled tamely in her hand as she showed it to the child. Then she invited us to enter. We did so,



standing in the middle of the room that we might not inadvertently carry off anything belonging to the household. The woman got a nicked and cracked saucer, of which she was evidently proud, and to show me how cleanly she was, carefully licked it all over inside, first one way then the other, then filled it with salmon berries, and with a smile that needed no translation offered it to Serene. The child looked doubtfully at the gift, then at me. I gave her a few from the top and then informed the woman that we must return to the boat. Salmon berries reminds me of a great kettle of ill-smelling salmon heads this woman was boiling. I suppose this dainty betokened company to dinner.

Kokrine's is a trading post 800 miles up the river. The man himself has lived in Alaska for forty years.

I shall never hear of the Tozakakat river, which empties its magnificent waters into the Yukon, 883 miles from St. Michael, without recalling the gaunt figure of a starving man the boat picked up. He was an Irishman, who had started out with a companion and a \$1,200 outfit to prospect. For some reason they parted, a very foolish thing to do in that country, where it is most unwise for a man to go prospecting alone. The Irishman had built a boat, and it upset, the rapid current carrying away everything but his ax and gun. He lost his bearings, a thing by no means difficult to do in Alaska, owing to the erratic movements of the summer sun, and walked what he afterward found to be 300 miles, keeping parallel with the Yukon he wished to strike, tormented by mosquitoes, and without sufficient food. His dogs were stung so terribly about the eyes that they became blind and mad, so he was obliged to shoot them. His boots gave out, and for days he had been tramping over the mountains barefooted. His feet were cut,



bleeding and stung till it was agony to even stand upon them. For eighteen days he had suffered everything, and had lost thirty-seven pounds flesh. He shot what he could, but had no way of cooking meat. He at last struck the Tozakakat river, and built a raft to float down it, but the current was swift and the little stream winding, so that he was constantly swung against rocks, and the light raft demolished. In this way he lost three, but upon the fourth he reached the Yukon. He then left the raft, and fell exhausted and starving upon the beach. His last food, four days before, had been one grouse, which he ate raw. Before that several days had elapsed without food of any kind. When the Indians found him lying upon the bank almost dead, they showed themselves good Samaritans, though they had never heard the word. Although he had the always-envied rifle and an ax, and would have been dead by neglect only in a short time, they brought him food and tried to prevent his eating too much, but he told me that he had eaten five entire salmon in spite of them. Upon seeing how weak he was, one of the Indians ran all the way to Ft. Adams, where Mr. Prevost, the Episcopalian minister, was routed out at one o'clock at night to come and see what could be done. Mr. and Mrs. Prevost, by the way, are greatly honored, not only by Indians but by whites throughout all the region. The missionary accompanied the Indian, but found that eleven years of Alaskan hardship had inured the miner to exposure and lack of food. He was still too weak to walk, but in no danger. I could not but recall Blair's lines:

"O cursed lust of gold! when for thy sake  
The fool throws up his interest in both worlds;  
First starved in this, then damned in that to come."

The miner was tenderly cared for by the Indians



and although he was defenseless and penniless, he was put into the bottom of a canoe with his precious gun and ax beside him and rapidly paddled several miles to meet our boat, that he might be taken back up the river. One of our passengers had made the daily remark, which I suppose he thought epigrammatic, that, "The only thing you can make of an Indian is a good horsethief." As he himself had wasted a good education and a generous patrimony, drank, gambled, and the rest of it, I privately thought he was about the last one to criticise the low moral plane of a poor dirty Indian, and should be the last to ridicule those who "wasted their time" civilizing the red man. This man listened to the Irishman's story with keen interest, when he was able to talk. I asked if the Indians were good to him. The miner replied gratefully and with an old-fashioned courtesy, "Madam, my own family couldn't have done more. I owe them my life, and they knew I hadn't an ounce of dust and should probably never see them again." I turned to our wit, and said something about that's being a little out of the horsethief line. We never heard the remark from him again.

"I suppose you have had enough of Alaska after this experience?" said I to the Irishman. "Why, no, madam," he replied simply; "it's all part of the life. I shall be well in a few days, then I shall borrow some money for an outfit, and start again." Well, success to him!

Near Ft. Adams is St. James Mission. Mr. and Mrs. Prevost came down for their mail; bright, both of them, and energetic. Mrs. Prevost's mother was spending the summer at this forlorn place, a stupendous change from her New York city home. The mission owns a tiny steamer called "The Northern Light," which puffs nervously along as if realizing how much



missionary work needed immediate attention along the Yukon. Mr. Prevost published the first newspaper on the great river, *The Yukon Press*, an annual. Writing upon the question of Alaskan mail, Mr. Prevost mentions the fact that both companies had all along carried mail of all kinds into the country free, yet, when the government called for tenders, though theirs were carefully estimated but a trifle above cost of carriage, the contract was awarded to an English syndicate, whose bid was computed to be over fifty per cent below actual expenses. Mr. Prevost continues:

"The action of the Government with regard to Canada's carrying her mail through thirty miles of Alaskan territory, reminds one of the old adage of hunting for the mote in our neighbor's eye. What action the Canadian Government will take with regard to Uncle Sam's calmly taking his mail last summer through 700 miles of their territory, remains to be seen. This recalls a suggestion, which appeared in our first issue four years ago.

"Should a winter mail eventually be established, why not have the route entirely on Alaskan soil? Why take the present summer route, leading through 700 miles of our neighbor's territory, when shorter and less dangerous passages are to be found within our own borders? In winter there are two accessible routes: one by way of Copper River or Prince William Sound, and the other via Cook Inlet. In an air line we deduce the following distances from Circle City: To Sitka, 328 miles; to Kadiak, mouth of Cook Inlet, 306 miles; and to Nuchek, Prince William Sound, 189 miles. These distances might be deceiving; as for instance, although the last mentioned is less than two-thirds of either of the others, still it is more circuitous and winding, and when the actual traveled distance has been calculated, it will be found to be nearly 800 miles, which, by the way, is about 100 miles shorter than the distance from Circle City to Sitka. We have reason to consider, however, that the shortest route of



all, by actual travel, would be from the head waters of Cook Inlet, by way of the river Sushitna, and the upper portion of the Copper River to the Tanana and across to Circle City. It is now known that the passes from Copper River to the Tanana are not easily traveled, but lack as well the severe winds that are characteristic of the Dyea Pass in winter."

This question of mail on the Yukon is one that demands immediate and careful attention. I offer no suggestion as to the solution, but it does seem hard that when a man has been without mail for a whole year, he cannot obtain his letters at Minook, for instance, because they are addressed to Dawson.

The scenery here is beautiful. "The Palisades" rise stern and rugged, like fortresses erected by Nature to guard her treasures of gold. The town of Weare, at the confluence of the Tanana and the Yukon, 897 miles from St. Michael, bids fair to become the metropolis of the lower river, commanding as it does the rich Tanana district, and being situated adjoining the military reservation laid off last year by Captain P. H. Ray. It is a pity, by the way, that the Spanish troubles prevented Congress from taking much needed action looking toward a more efficient and less unwieldy government for Alaska, as recommended by the able report of Captain Ray. This officer was stationed for some time in Alaska, and wintered at Point Barrow without losing a man. His was the only successful government expedition up to that time. For that reason the War Department selected him as especially qualified to look into conditions arising from the sudden influx of miners. The President sent him as a special emissary. Captain Ray prosecuted his investigations without fear or favor, and his recommendations merit active attention. It is utterly impossible to govern that great country like an ordinary territory. It



should for the present, and the immediate present, have a military form of government, and none would make a more efficient military governor than this same Captain, now Colonel, P. H. Ray, of the Eighth U. S. Infantry, for his difficult accomplishment in Alaska brought him merited promotion upon his return. Captain Ray's heroic stand, with no other aid than Lieutenant Richardson, against hundreds of excited men and many desperate characters when they threatened to seize the food stores, shows of what stuff the man is made. He is determined, fearless, informed and clear-sighted as to present needs and future consequences. If more, and more intelligent attention is not given to this great province, the United States will have to fight for its rich possession some day. Less politics and more patriotism are what are sorely needed at Washington.

The Tanana (pronounced Tan'-a-naw) is 1500 miles long, wide, shallow, and very rapid. A light-draught steamer could ascend it 250 miles. The ignorance shown by those building boats for Alaska is laughable. A two and a half foot draw is safest. The portage from the Tanana River to the Kuskokwim is not long. The latter river is sluggish, muddy, with shoals a long distance from its mouth at Kuskokwim Bay on Bering Sea. Numberless creeks empty into the Kuskokwim, and big discoveries will probably be made in this hitherto inaccessible region. Indians up both this river and the Tanana are considerably taller than the Yukon tribes. The Kuskokwim is also noted for fleas; and, remember, to establish a distinguishing reputation in any variety of insects in Alaska, is to argue pre-eminence indeed.

I photographed a Kuskokwim Indian, one of the boat's crew. He was tall, well built, and wore what had originally been a white sweater. His head looked





"PADEREWSKI."



The figure is a map of the northern Adriatic coastline, specifically the area from Trieste to Ancona. It shows the coastline with several sampling stations marked by numbers 1 through 15. A scale bar at the bottom indicates a distance of 100 km. An inset map in the top right corner shows the broader geographical context, including the Adriatic Sea, the Gulf of Trieste, and the surrounding countries: Italy, Slovenia, and Croatia. The map also shows major cities like Trieste, Udine, Gorizia, and Ancona, as well as the Gulf of Trieste and the Gulf of Ancona.



enormous under a tremendous shock of hair. As this was never combed, the back of his head looked exactly like a dusty, half-worn, tumbled monkey muff. The black locks fell upon his brow in the fashion of a foreign musician, and his expression was so soulful, not to say daft, that our wit dubbed him Paderewski. He could not speak the language of the other Indians, which threw him upon his own thoughts, if he had any. One day, when we stopped for wood, there was found to be little. After it was all aboard, the Kuskokim wandered ashore and stood gazing about. "See Paderewski," said the man who named him, "See Paderewski looking for the lost c(h)ord."

Now we have entered "The Ramparts," which have gathered the river channels into one, deep and murmuring with rapids. Fishing stations are here frequent, for the fish are massed, and Indians camp out along the river to quickly procure their winter's supply. The mountains grow higher and more beautiful. At last we have reached Minook, the first post for mines on the Yukon, 1,075 miles from St. Michael, and but five or six miles back from the river over the easiest trail to any of the mining districts, which are invariably back in the gulches. The Yukon long ago bore its own gold out to sea, and is now engaged only in transporting other people's. Minook's nearness to sea and river is greatly in its favor, for "grub" will always be plenty and packing cheap. When I first went up the Yukon there were only a few miners prospecting on the creeks, and no indication of a town. Among these were Drew, a mining engineer from Milwaukee, later of Butte, Montana, and A. W. Briggs of New York, recently from the Black Hills. The latter is dubbed the Yukon poet, though I did not succeed in obtaining any of his verses, but I did laugh



continually over his wit. Learning I was from Chicago, he frankly stated that he hated the city. "There's only one thing I like about Chicago," Mr. Briggs asserted; "that is the people are all in such a hurry that they don't stop to tell you their troubles." They had fared badly for "grub," all agreed, during the winter, but there was a superabundance of whisky which could be warranted to turn Israfil into Beelzebub before anybody could realize what was going on. This whisky sold for \$30 a gallon, and cost ninety cents a gallon in 'Frisco.

The miners were crazy for news. They showed an enthusiasm over a torn and ancient newspaper that a sack of nuggets could not arouse, and they read everything to the personals, the beauty advertisements, and the lost-and-found. Briggs said they would have been reduced to reading a street commissioner's report and the dictionary had those volumes been present in camp. All the men eagerly enquired if there had been war over Cuba, and we sorrowfully answered no. They asked us who the cabinet were, and how such and such an occurrence turned out. To them everything awaited a conclusion. The most exciting incidents had ended for them like the thrilling chapters in harrowing story papers, and there had been no "next" "to be continued" in. They were amazed at our forgetfulness and ignorance, and so, in truth, was I, when it was brought to notice by their eager questioning.

The second time I went up the river, the *Healy* carried a number of miners who had drifted down in rowboats from Circle City, 319 miles, a committee sent to investigate the district. One of them had that morning purchased the first town lot in Rampart City, as the Minook post was afterward called. It was 50x100 feet, \$100. When I returned, lots had risen



to \$500; now, I am told, they are \$1,200. There were twenty-five men when we went up, sixty when we came down, and over a thousand now, I hear. Both companies have established stores, and there is much excitement. Gold, though not so plentiful as in Klondike, is of much better quality, being worth \$18.68 an ounce at Minook and \$17 in Klondike. The discoverer, Minook, is an Indian. Indian prospectors are closely watched because they possess much information which they refuse to give out, especially about quartz lodes. When they obtain tools they are followed. Little Minook, ten miles long, and Hunter's, twenty-five miles, flow into Minook. Hunter was disgusted with his discovery, and abandoned it, but has returned, hearing how well the district is panning out. Old miners say Minook is best adapted to hydraulic mining of all the Alaskan districts. The creeks flow between high banks, and the side-pockets run back from a quarter to three-quarters of a mile from the stream. This is a very important fact, and the find at Little Minook proves what has been asserted, that gold deposits may be safely predicted from Minook down to St. Michaels, as part of the great gold belt which ends in the richness of Siberia, where the Russian government owns inestimable mines, which have been worked for many years. On "Discovery," Little Minook, 122 ounces was taken out in a short time from one prospect hole. One miner sank a four-foot hole eighteen feet to bed rock, and took out \$3,350. Many of the men who started for Dawson late in the summer, and failed to get up the river, wintered about Minook, and staked it for twenty miles around. They are more than likely to find in their *mis*-fortune a fortune, as did a man Mr. Briggs told me of. "Poor fellow, he had been ten years in Alaska chasing



rainbows, and never even caught a color (color is Yukon vernacular for gold), so he decided to return to his father's house. He struggled, up to his knees in mud, over the terrible trail, and arrived just in time to miss the last boat of the season. It is safe to assert that he was the maddest man in the country. The welkin rang with wicked swear words. That man struck it rich in Klondike that winter, and took out his dust in the spring. Men don't shake the dust of this country from their feet, you know."

On Hunter Creek claims are 1,000 feet front, but they are 500 feet on Minook and Little Minook. There is a November "representation," and a winter one from January 1 to May 1. It is an unaccountably cold district, ice frequently forming in July. The ground is frozen from fifteen to twenty feet down, while at Circle City, further north, it freezes only a few feet below the surface.

Did I tell you of the Minook miner whose gun had a gold sight? He said he had no metal handy but gold nuggets, so he hammered one down to replace the sight he had lost. I said something about how hardly money came in the States. He answered gravely, "The blessed home country; I have wasted my youth here. Success is coming now, but I don't feel fit to go back to the States and marry the only sort of woman I could love. My gold has cost me youth, and pleasures and culture and home, beside privations and hard work. Haven't you noticed the expression on the faces of us fellows? You can tell a new-comer the minute you see him, he looks alive, enthusiastic, perhaps jolly. We old miners are always grave, unless we're drinking. It's a dreadful country to think in, the solitudes are awful. We all know why the Russians banish their convicts to Siberia."



The last time I saw Minook, its still, solemn mountains were glowing like opals under a midnight sunset. It looked like fairyland itself, for the lights were golden and the shadows of amethyst.

One other remembrance I have of this part of the Yukon—an evening's walk to Fort Hamlin, at the end of "The Ramparts." The scene was of exceeding beauty, as the river took a turn among the mountains, followed closely by myriads of wild asters, but the mosquitoes were so ferocious that I became fairly enraged. With head covered, and a branch waving in each hand, I tried to fight off the pests, but they were not in the least discomfited. The house at Hamlin was shut up, but guns were out, lying on logs in front, quite secure from theft. Many other things indicated the country and the ingenuity necessary in it. The log cabin was chinked with reindeer moss, a screen door hung by tin hinges with nails for the pins, a homemade wooden washboard leaned against the house, to which steps formed of birch saplings laid in the earth led from the beach below. The place was deserted save for a tent down by the river. A woman came out, holding her head upon her clasped hands, and making low pathetic sounds like a dog in pain, begging help. She was thin and twisted with rheumatism, and wanted medicine. Of course, I had none, but it was hard to tell her so, and to see her drag herself back and lie down upon the ground hopelessly. Even if I had had any medicine, I should have run risks in giving it to her, for had she died soon her people would have held me responsible and demanded blood for blood. But I have often thought of the suffering creature, alone but for a sleeping baby, lying upon the ground, the seal of death upon her face, watching the hurrying river as if it were her own life



tide, and the mysterious mountains out of whose sight she had never been, but was so soon to go. White or Indian, "Two hands upon the breast and labor is past."



## CHAPTER XII

### COAL, QUARTZ, AND OTHER MINERALS OF ALASKA

For the majority of people, cold, gold, and Alaska are synonymous terms, and it will be some time before they are differentiated. The placer mines of that country and of Klondike have driven the world half crazy, a world quite old enough to know better. It is natural that gold in such marvelous quantities, so broadly distributed, should monopolize attention at first, but already the United States is beginning to realize the vast resources and possibilities of its treasure, laid by for the nation's rainy day, and as an inheritance for her children's children. In Alaska, our coal mines are gold mines, too.

Nature distributes her gifts with reference to one another. Alaska is heavily timbered, so that fuel may be readily obtained for the placers, and when the "poor man's gold mines" shall have become exhausted and the capitalist takes his turn at quartz mining, mountains of coal stand ready to lend their strength to the stamps. Nowhere else in the world are such immense coal deposits, nor ever have been. What dense vegetation for ages does their presence and that of the deep peat of Alaska argue! Both bituminous and anthracite have been found. If cannel coal—so called because it flames like a candle—exists there, gas could be very easily manufactured, and the expense and lack of light, one of the present hardships of the long winter, would be abolished. Near the Yukon, 849 miles from St. Michael, is "Burning Mountain,"



which is undoubtedly a gigantic coal deposit afire. The Indians say it has always smoked.

Almost upon the Arctic Circle, the Porcupine River empties into the Yukon, 1,344 miles from its mouth. Near "Rampart House," extending along the Porcupine from about 175 to 200 miles up, are cliffs of almost solid coal, the dust from which blackens the snow for many miles, as if the polluted beauty were trodden under foot in the streets of a great city instead of lying upon the unbroken solitudes of Alaska. As the Porcupine is navigable for considerable boats as far up as these great coal cliffs, they could be mined from the side directly into scows.

But even these are exceeded by the almost incredible coal deposits along the small creeks feeding the Tanana River. Mr. Frank Densmore, who has been for twelve years a miner and explorer in Alaska, and knows its rivers better, probably, than any other man, told me last summer of these inexhaustible bodies of coal which he had recently discovered off the Tanana, and which have never before been reported. The Tanana, he it said, is 1,500 miles long, and Densmore has traveled its length. He said, in his quiet, unboastful way, that there he had discovered bluffs with six seams in clear sight, the smallest of which is eight feet through, the largest thirty-six feet! No need for worry about fuel for future generations. They might all be warmed and lighted from this coal yard of the world.

Coal is as easily mined in Alaska as in West Virginia, being plainly discernible on mountain sides and in these great seams along bluffs. The out-croppings are crumbly, but a little distance in the quality is in most cases excellent. In some places it is fronted by a "coal-wall" of slate-like rock. Most of the large



rivers and the numberless creeks feeding them are bordered in great stretches with coal, which can be shot down into boats for cheap transportation. As soon as people have recovered from the frenzy into which the glitter of gold has thrown them, they will find this duller mineral is not to be despised, and its mining will furnish employment for thousands of men. Because no one has so far had time or inclination to dig the black diamonds, miners have had no other fuel than wood, with which a fire could not be kept the whole night of bitter cold. With one's bed over a glacier, and the frost creeping through the floor, this left much to be desired. A coal fire would warm one's very heart under these circumstances. I asked one miner if he did not think an open fire of glowing coal would seem homelike and cheerful after a long, hard day's digging. His face lighted for a moment, but he replied, "We don't have time for any such luxuries as that. Besides, I don't know why, suppose it's the rarity of the atmosphere, but open fires won't burn in Alaska. Even stoves don't draw very well unless they are boxed with sheet iron."

"Briggs-es mine," as it is popularly called, is the only one that has so far been regularly tunneled and worked. It lies near Minook Creek, where the latest excitement on the American side has been aroused, about 1,100 miles from St. Michael. The shaft can be seen from the boat, as it burrows into the mountain side but a little way up from the river bank. I asked several old miners and prospectors what they considered the limits of the coal region in Alaska. With one accord, they answered, "Alaska itself."

These great coal fields extend far into Russia on the west and Northwest Territory on the east. For some time a blacksmith at Forty-Mile, N. W. T., has used



coal obtained from a curious great rock called Five Fingers, ten miles away. Five miles below Forty-Mile is a valuable coal stretch which was purchased by the "N. A. T. & T. Co.," who have built a tramway to conduct the coal to the river. Last summer they sent up a dozen oxen to haul this coal. While awaiting a steamer at St. Michael to take them up the Yukon, these oxen attracted much attention from the Eskimo, who came from far and near to see the strange beasts. By the way, when Captain Ray returned from Alaska, he told me that six of these oxen had wintered at Fort Yukon, where one hundred tons of hay had been cut. The oxen were fat and sleek. Two of them had been used for hauling at Minook. One day, as the man was driving them, urging the lazy things with a gad, the miners called a meeting, decided that gads were cruel, that the beasts would better be dead, and should escape the gad by death. Whereupon the oxen were killed, and Rampart City ate fresh meat. This is a good example of the proceedings of miners' courts.

The English will rejoice over these Dominion coal fields, for years ago they began to be alarmed over the rapidly decreasing domestic output, a decrease scarce to be wondered at when you remember that the Anglo-Saxons were the first to burn coal, over a thousand years ago, and nearly six centuries ago parliament interdicted its growing use, which was considered injurious to public health. But its use has increased to the present day, while the coal has not. As one of their writers said, "We are not living on the interest of our coal, but on the capital."

William Ogilvie, Dominion land surveyor, a man acquainted with the whole Yukon region as few are, writes, "In the course of a year, I believe coal will supersede wood for fuel." A year ago he reported,



"about seven miles up Coal Creek, in coarse sandstone and under drift clay and gravel, is a seam twelve feet six inches thick. Coal was reported at that time on the Chandinduk, thirty miles from Cudahy. In this region, the coal extends along the valley of the Yukon from Coal Creek down for ten or twelve miles, and up to Twelve-Mile Creek, which flows into the Yukon about thirty miles above Fort Cudahy."

Oil, too, in positive lakes, has been discovered in Alaska, and it is probable that the entire country is a vast retort for natural gas, which may yet drive the engines for the smelters. On the whole, it seems that Mother Earth need not, even in her old age, go shivering to bed. Yet, if her prodigal children burn the coal till her bins are empty and she, poor thing, can only freeze to death like the moon, who ought to serve as a dreadful example, we ourselves shall have long since quitted this planet with its problems present and to come.

Of the quartz gold of Alaska, little is said, but the world will talk of it soon. While there was no way of bringing into the country the heavy machinery necessary in reducing ores, men naturally neglected quartz for the more accommodating placer gold; but many quietly explored the rugged mountains back of the golden streams, and know where to locate claims when the time comes, and it is near at hand. Mr. Densmore, to whom I have before referred because of his knowledge of Alaskan rivers at their sources, has ascended the Koyukuk 600 of its 1,000 miles in a little steamer drawing about two and a half feet of water. When the river is high, even larger boats could navigate it that far, but not, ordinarily, more than 450 miles. He says that for the first 400 miles the sluggish river is crookeder than the Jordan. The bed of the Koyukuk



for one hundred miles is of white quartz. Densmore pounded this quartz, and tried out the gold, obtaining from some bars, by this primitive process, from \$50 to \$70 a day. He found one boulder weighing at least 100 pounds, in a gulch on the Keokuk, which contained free gold. Pay quartz is also reported up the Tanana, and I saw some good specimens which came from some locality near St. Michael, the prospector would not tell me where. Miller, an old miner, and the recorder of the Minook district, says that from Hunter Creek, in that group, quartz ledges extend twenty miles each way. Of course, the quartz of Southeastern Alaska is well known. The Treadwell mine on Douglass Island, two miles from Juneau, has the largest quartz mill in the world, and produces over half a million dollars a year, although the ore averages but \$2.50 to \$3 a ton. There is but one other where the ore is quarried, instead of mined. Quartz has been found in all this region, though not particularly rich anywhere. On the Western Islands, the Apollo mine, on Unga Island, is the best, and is yielding \$300,000 a year. Much of the gold is free. Prospecting on Kadiak Island has developed some promising quartz.

More prospecting has been done on the Canadian side in the Yukon Valley. Just below Forty-Mile a curious isolated butte rises, from which quartz gold has already been taken running from \$4 to \$20 a ton. Mr. Ogilvie says in his report, "Assays of the Cone Hill quartz are very satisfactory, and the quantity good for generations of work. Were it on the coast, the Treadwell mine would be diminutive beside it. \* \* \* The miners here are, I understand, getting up a petition to the minister asking for aid in opening a way from the south and building along it shelter for



winter travelers, with suitable supplies scattered along."

They were working the quartz mine directly opposite Dawson when I was there, having two tunnels well in. The specimen highest in gold, however, assayed \$19 to the ton, and the best specimen containing gold, copper, silver, lead and antimony, assayed \$46 for all. It is a curious fact, by the way, that there is but one place in the world where all the minerals, including gold, can be saved in reducing the ore. That is Swansea, Wales, where the secret is most carefully guarded, all the workmen being under oath to preserve it inviolate. Silver can be destroyed, but not gold, which is, like Truth, immortal.

Copper is found in many parts of Alaska, not in ores, from which it is by such tedious processes removed, but in large pieces of native copper. This is generally too hard to be easily worked, but the native copper of Alaska is quite soft, so much so that that found at the head of White River is whittled by the Indians. They commonly make bullets of it. Pure copper is found near the head of the Tanana, and also up the Kuskokwim. On the forks of the Koyukuk, about 200 miles up the river, there is much of the same mineral, which was one of the first to be used by man.

Cinnabar is a rare mineral, the ore of mercury. Spain has for 2,300 years produced the bulk of it, yet even cinnabar is among the treasures of this Isle of Monte Cristo.

Amber, the gum of an extinct coniferous tree, is usually found where vast deposits of coal lie, and Alaska is no exception, though no amber of fine quality has so far been discovered. Mr. Miller, now recorder of Minook, is said to be a fine geologist, and to possess a valuable mineral cabinet. I was told he had some



specimens of amber that he had found in coal. Sometimes this deposit throws much light upon the age of a country. Pope says:

Pretty in amber to observe the forms  
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms;  
The things we know are neither rich nor rare,  
But wonder how the devil they got there.

Mr. Miller, while washing out gold, also discovered a little platinum.

Iron and iron-rock have been found in Franklin Gulch. The presence of the latter is a pretty good indication of the near proximity of gold. Iron-rock is extremely hard and dull black, resembling ebony. It is sometimes found in cubes, geometrically perfect. A miner I met, disdaining common nuggets of gold, had a beautiful little specimen of iron-rock; which he intended wearing for a luck-charm.

Along Napoleon Creek is a cement ledge at least 500 feet long.

Gray marble is found on Forty-Mile Creek. Though not hard where exposed, it is said to improve with depth.

Granites are found five miles up Sixty-Mile Creek.

Some people in this world never succeed to positions of honor, nor to the emoluments thereof, but they assist those who do, and, themselves unheard of, make toward righteousness, which is only rightness in any work, after all. It is so with antimony, that hard, white, untarnishable mineral. It is in the background of the useful Britannia metal; it helps the large concave mirrors reflect the heavens in astronomical observations; the great bell's tone is the clearer and stronger because of it; and its strength, wedded to the beauty of a precious metal, forms a union of real service. Antimony occurs in most of Alaska's quartz.



Free silver has been washed out on El Dorado Creek. Crystals, in cubes a little smaller than rock-sugar, have been picked up on the Porcupine.

Asbestos, lead, and jade, that heaven-fallen stone of the ancients and of barbarians today, have all been found in Alaska, and meerschaum, sacred to "My Lady Nicotine." Near Ft. Wrangell there is a great ledge of garnet and separate garnets are found upon many creeks. Mrs. J. J. Healy has a curious nugget, set by the hand of Nature herself with a little garnet. Several rubies have also been washed out, but none, it is unnecessary to state, at all resembling that fabulous one mentioned by Marco Polo as belonging to the King of Ceylon, a ruby flawless, a span in length, and of the thickness of a man's arm. No wonder the price of a city was offered for it by Kublai Khan, and small wonder that even so great a price was refused.

And lastly, ivory. That of the walrus is of little value, not being true ivory, which is distinguished as only that which, in a transverse section, shows circular markings. But it is probable that there will be much fossil ivory unearthed, tusks of the extinct hairy elephants which roamed Alaska in herds æons ago. Scientists estimate the years since these huge beasts lived, with latitude rather surprising, from 150,000 to 1,000,000 years, yet whole mounds of fossil ivory exist in Alaska today. Mastodon Creek was named from the great deposits of mastodons there, animals which even antedated the hairy elephant. Most of this ivory so far discovered has been exposed to the air and is worthless, being chalky and fragile. The Eskimo and Indians use it for carving because it can be so easily scratched. I have a pipe made from it, and several bits of the curve of the great tusk etched with figures of almost Egyptian style. But some of



this fossil ivory is very beautiful. G. G. Brittner, of Chicago, the oldest ivory cutter in the country, who has turned billiard balls for all the expert players of the world, and who knows ivory as he does himself, grew enthusiastic over this Arctic ivory. A miner sent Mr. Brittner a mammoth tusk from which to cut some balls. Mr. Brittner told him if he knew where there was plenty of such fine ivory it would prove his Klondike. The Indians are said to know where fossil ivory of this quality is plenty, but they keep the secret.

Just the thought of one of these hideous hairy giant beasts, if it comes to me late in the evening, invariably gives me nightmare. It is too dreadful to contemplate what effect a herd of them in the flesh would produce. The fossil elephant and the mastodon, by the way, are the only extinct animals of so early a life whose frames have been actually seen entire. No part of either is left to the imagination of the naturalist to supply. The hairy elephant, indeed, has been preserved by Mother Earth's unrivaled system of cold storage to this very day, so many natives say. However that may be, in 1799, a hunter of the far north came upon a shapeless mass in the midst of rocks of ice. He did not then discover what it was, but four years later found it to be a prehistoric animal standing erect in death and ice of many centuries. Instead of being overwhelmed with scientific delight, imaginative horror, or even ordinary curiosity, the hunter's paltry brain experienced nothing but a desire for the spoils. He clambered up the mighty dead, so strangely left the biographer of, and monument to, his ancient race, and cut away the huge tusks. He did not even consider the strange discovery worth reporting, but the sale of the ivory awakened questions, and in 1806 an expedition returned to the monster. Late summers had melted the ice,



and after its many thousands of years' waiting, the giant beast lay prone upon its side, and dogs, wolves and bears had feasted upon its flesh. Dampness had induced rapid decay. But three-fourths of the pelt remained. This was carefully removed. It was so heavy that ten men with difficulty carried it to the shore, but 150 feet distant. The skin was dark gray, covered with thick, reddish, curly wool, hanging in locks, and this, by black bristle-like hairs, from an inch to eighteen inches in length. The warmth of his covering effectually opposes the hypothesis of a tropical climate's, formerly existing in these northern lands. This elephant, a male, was 16 feet 4 inches long, 9 feet 4 inches high, and the curve of the tusks 9 feet 6. A long, heavy mane and ears ornamented with tufts of hair completed his beauties. All the skeleton but a foreleg and one piece of the tail was secured and removed to St. Petersburg, where, articulated and covered with the skin, it now stands. Part of the pelt was bought by the British Museum.

I have often thought of that unwieldy corpse, standing those weary ages in the far north, looking with unseeing eyes across the solitary waste of ice and snow, unable to lay his bones among his kindred, but waiting for something unknown. Changes stupendous and myriad took place in the world without, but none in the desolation which was his tomb. One day a puny being broke upon his solitude, but the dead had forgotten to keep watch; he perceived not the insignificant advent till the thief had despoiled him of his ivory crown. And his forgotten message! Ah, what was that for which he had stood, faithful beyond death itself since before the mountains were? He had failed. In despairing humiliation, he swayed to and fro and finally fell, crashing upon his mighty side,



prone upon the earth which even then refused him sepulchre. So ended his long, lonely vigil, so the message, like many another one, rang clearly out in the moment of seeming defeat. For it is not the messenger—if only we could bear to remember that! it is not the messenger, but the message, the message.



## CHAPTER XIII

### ALASKA DOGS

Have you ever thought that it is of the commonest things we know least? Evidences of electricity are constantly seen at every hand, yet the greatest scientist in the world knows little of its nature. Death is of momentary occurrence, yet to the wisest it remains as great a mystery as to a little child. Common sense is more uncommon than charity, and in a commonwealth wealth is exceptional. Show me the animal found most frequently among men, and I'll show you one that the most eminent naturalist has never been able even to classify, and which remains to him more of a puzzle than the ichthyosaurus, which has been extinct for ages. This, too, when the dog has lived about men since the earliest recorded history. The monuments of Nineveh and Egypt bear many pictures of domesticated dogs, and the Bible's many references to them are always execrations, with the single exception, I think, of those that took pity upon Lazarus. They are charged with every despicable trait. Moses associates the price of a dog with the hire of a whore. Ancient writers seem almost unanimous upon this subject, yet Homer writes most touchingly of Ulysses' dog, the only one that recognized the returned king. Perhaps Homer, blind, had been led about by his, and was grateful.

If dogs were not maligned, they have certainly benefited marvelously by civilization. Cuvier says, "The dog is the most complete, the most singular, and the



most useful conquest ever made by man." Certainly he is now credited with almost every virtue. Many a little child would scorn a Heaven where he would not be welcomed by the joyous yelp of his dog and guided through the streets of gold to the asphodel meadows where they could tumble noisily throughout the shining day. Have you heard of the little boy who ceased his crying over his dead playfellow to remark, "I'll bet the angels'll be scared when Fido tears up the path; you know he's always cross with strangers."

"Old dog Tray's ever faithful, grief cannot drive him away;  
He's gentle and he's kind, you'll never, never find  
A better friend than old dog Tray."

But dogs are only as civilized as their master race, and among Indians they are still barbarians. I never realized this so forcibly as in Alaska. Between the natives and their dogs exist no love, kindness nor fidelity. The Indian kicks and cuffs and starves his dog, the little child follows suit, and the dog is cowardly, quarrelsome, thieving, in consequence. I did not see a single example of affection toward dogs in Alaska. They are tethered short by a piece of wood tied to a peg driven into the ground, and every native that goes by seems to bestow an idle kick in passing, while children find much amusement in pulling their hair and beating them till they howl. They are often cruelly overworked, and are in a chronic state of semi-starvation, the result being that they are expert thieves. A man in St. Michael's told me that they wished to keep some meat for future use, so barreled it and buried the barrel. The dogs smelled the meat through all the snow, tunneled it, and actually ate right through the oak staves and obtained that meat. On the coast, when the Eskimo are working their dogs,



they give each three tomcod a day, and a tomcod is a very small fish. The dogs are gorging then. When not in actual service, they must procure their own rations. They thrive on what a Harlem goat would disdain, they fatten on what a mountain burro would not discover. This is fortunate, for as Eskimo eat almost everything, even to entrails, which are their lobster *à la* Newburg, there is little to spare for the poor brutes, and they are often reduced to a diet of an occasional tin can, a scrap of sealskin, the memory of tomcod, and hope. None of these are fattening. The dogs become even too weak to fight.

Eskimo dogs are a class in themselves. They closely resemble wolves, if indeed they are not of the same family. Their skins would, unquestioned, draw wolf bounty. They are gray, with sharp ears and pointed faces, and weigh about forty pounds. A wolf was once caught at Fish River valley and crossed with dogs. It surely seems that wolves are only the savage ancestors of the barbarian dogs. As has been intimated, Eskimo have no mercy on their canine servants. One night one of the poor brutes bore six pups in the snow. In the morning the Eskimo, a woman, too, dragged the howling mother away by the ears from her young, hitched her with the rest of the team, and applied the lash, leaving the helpless puppies upon the ground to starve, not even troubling to kill them. A white man who saw it showed that much mercy. In driving, they have no word of command, only the sting of the long swirling rawhide, with which Eskimo are so expert. Surely, if dogs live again, these have suffered enough to place them upon a higher canine plane.

Eskimo dogs are like any other rabble. They advance fiercely upon a stranger, but if he will face



two hundred of them fearlessly, they will sneak one behind another and run away at a motion, in a truly human way. If you are dressed like a native, they will not notice you. One peculiarity of Eskimo dogs is that they cannot bark; they howl, though, in a manner to drive one mad.

When necessary, the natives eat their dogs, but they do not seem to esteem them a dainty, as the Indians further south do, where they fatten them in preparation for a feast. Captain Barr has eaten dog with Rain-in-the-Face and Crow Dog, and pronounces it very good. There are many miners who have been several years in the Northland who know the flavor of dog, for prejudices weaken under the stress of hunger to an astonishing degree. Mr. Densmore told me that in his twelve years' life in Alaska, he had eaten of many strange dishes, but the worst he remembered was a meal he and his partner cooked while exploring. They had watched for game, but succeeded in finding nothing but one loon and one muskrat. The loon was so tough that it took both of them to skin it, and the muskrat was not in his first youth. One was black, one blue. They boiled them together as long as their half-starved stomachs would wait, and then sat down to eat, though the "game" was still so tough that you couldn't stick a fork through the gravy. "Still," said Densmore, "that dinner disappeared as rapidly as difficulty in mastication would permit, for we had a four days' appetite for it. 'Twasn't really bad, though I've tasted things I liked better. However, we found muskrat and loon boiled together make good glue, which kept us together till we struck something else. Unusual? Why, no, a prospector has plenty of such experiences if he goes far, as I have done, up the rivers and away from trad-



ing posts. I remember once traveling from Forty-Mile to St. Michael's (1,598 miles). It was in '95, the year the *Arctic* sunk. Toward the end we had absolutely nothing to eat for several days but flour and cranberries which we picked. I've never eaten a cranberry since. I had my fill for a lifetime then. I don't even eat cranberries with turkey now—"especially," and Densmore's black eyes laughed, "especially as I haven't tasted turkey since before that. I haven't been out of Alaska for twelve years."

Dogs may be bought cheap down the river about St. Michael. Formerly they were but three to five dollars; now they are ten, the freight making them cost much more. Every boat carries a number, and these join their voices with their brethren's at every landing in long-drawn howls, which it is impossible to describe. I never heard one of them make a joyous noise of any kind. Misery has been their portion, and they know no other language than a wail. Captain Barr told me that last winter they gathered a team of dogs for use on short trips from the boat. They treated the dodging brutes kindly and fed them sufficiently, viz., a large dried salmon a day to each. At first the dogs would expect a kick from every near-by boot, and seemed puzzled by their humane treatment, but in a short time they avoided Indians, and finally wouldn't allow one to come aboard. Plainly, they remembered their former treatment, and resented it. Toward spring, when the ice was breaking up, they grew very uneasy, and watched it with undeniable anxiety. But the worst happened, just as they feared. The edict went forth and they had to keep it company, though they wouldn't leave, and begged and howled in quite a human way. Even after the boat left, the leader swam after it, howling dismally; it was really pitiful.



Last summer the *Healy* carried a huge full-blooded St. Bernard, whose pedigree was as long as your arm, "Lord Belvedere." He did no work, of course, and bore his title with a dignity which plainly indicated his blue blood. It was very laughable to see him go ashore at every landing and stand watching the barbarian dogs which fought to fill up time, while ever on the alert for garbage of any sort thrown over by the cook. They were too way-down-Beebe to afford him any real amusement, for I have often detected him in a long-drawn yawn, but they helped pass the time, he felt. The Indian dogs had the unusual sense to realize how inferior they were and kept their distance. I never saw it otherwise except at Nulato, where a disgraceful scene of presumption occurred. Lord Belvedere had strolled ashore as usual, and was idly watching the canaille, when one barbarian came near and brushed rudely against my lord's immaculate shirt front. Emboldened by this, as Lord Belvedere was evidently too astounded to say a word, another impudent Indian dog advanced and lightly struck him. Lord still refused to resent the insult offered by one so far beneath him. This was evidently construed as cowardice, and the "Siwash" followed him along, flicking him at intervals. I myself began to wonder at Lord Belvedere's patience, but he suddenly turned, seized the daring fellow, shook him violently, gave him a cuff or two, and set him down, glad enough to escape from the jeers of his fellow canines. Then Lord Belvedere, athletic, calm, bored, towering far above them, strolled back to the boat. Another time, though, he wandered along in his highbred way, apparently lost in thought, for he paid no attention to the whistle. After the boat was well under way, it was discovered my lord was not aboard. It was necessary to put back.



A plank was thrown out, but he would not risk wetting his feet, so one of the crew was obliged to assist his lordship aboard. He was not in the least ruffled. Thus does high birth tell. Soon after this, Captain Barr was ill, and the dog died. According to the universal Indian belief, the dog died in place of his master. I know once, in Montana, a squaw was wailing over the illness of her husband, when one of the tribe rushed joyously in to tell her that his horse was dead. She instantly rose, comforted, and no longer worried through his dangerous illness. St. Bernards are very valuable dogs for Alaska, by the way, being large, strong and accustomed to mountain climbing in the snow.

Last winter dogs were scarce up the Yukon, at prices which began at \$100 and reached \$225. One sold at Dawson for \$300. I saw four at Tanana for which their owner refused \$1000 in gold. All of these were nothing but ordinary dogs. They rented for two dollars apiece, and more, a month. As it requires seven for a good team, Indians made considerable money hiring them to prospectors. As the miners had no dried fish, which is dog's staff of life, they were obliged to feed them boiled flour with bacon grease stirred into it, boiled corn meal and bacon rinds, boiled dried peas, and other things strange to our notions of dog food. The only thing I heard of dogs refusing to eat was some bacon which one of the miners at Minook told me they scorned, although it cost forty-five cents a pound, and the men were frying it for their own dinner. He said that although it was seventy-two degrees below zero, they could none of them stand the odor while it sizzled, and had to open the door. I can well believe that, but with my knowledge of "Siwash" dogs, I can scarcely credit that they actually spurned



food of any kind. I fear that so strong a statement is to be taken only in a Pickwickian sense, as proving how unappetizing was the bacon. However, as the miner insists that he will stand by his sworn statement as to the incredible fact mentioned, I will, without further dissonance, simply append his name and make him solely responsible. It is Briggs, A. W. Briggs.

The Indians protect their store of food from dogs by placing in "caches," small sheds on posts. At the corner you may see a primitive stair, just a notched log. These caches are now also used by the whites.

Few miners brought dogs in with them, but one who did was "Abe"—I think his name is Gordon. He is a young and good-looking fellow who discovered the "Copper Chief" several years ago. His big Newfoundland easily "packs" forty pounds over the hills and far away to his mine. Some "civilized" dogs do better. I heard of one that packed seventy-five pounds on his back. It is a relief to see a great gentle dog like this Newfoundland in Alaska, and to note the confidence between him and his master. Indians think this affection between dog and man very laughable. There was a man named "Oscar" on our boat who had a small pet dog, of no earthly use except, as a tot I know says of himself, "'cept jus' only to love." When we stopped at Fort Yukon, Indian dogs and Indian boys both amused themselves chasing the little unfortunate, who put for the woods in spite of the mosquitoes. Oscar was wild—no relation to the English author—he came near being himself left in trying to recover his dog, and went to the purser almost in tears. He gave the purser a nugget worth nearly twenty dollars to induce him to get the dog upon his return.

Indians train their dogs from the time they are but





AN ALASKA "CACHE."



THE NEW  
AMERICAN  
REPUBLICAN



a month old. They make a little harness, and, driving a peg into the ground, hitch the pup, which is urged to tug away at the peg. The harness is enlarged from time to time. When six or seven months old, they are put with older dogs to draw a sled for a little trip. At a year they are regularly used. Brought up in harness almost from birth, the pups are actually restless without it. The dogs thus become strong for heavy loads. Last winter a team of fourteen drew 2,500 pounds fifteen miles over the ice on a bobsled. Dog sleds are lightly but very strongly made. A long thong is tied to the front, and the dogs are strung along it far enough apart to prevent their eating one another up, which seems to be their absorbing ambition. They retain their wolfish nature and are constantly fighting. Sometimes they will snarl up into a howling, biting mass of accumulated dog which threatens to overturn the entire outfit, and to cause apoplexy in the enraged prospectors. Then is the circumambient air navy blue with language unholy, and we turn sadly away. Dogs are not driven, but follow the man who runs ahead through the snow, while the other man steers the sled from behind.

At Circle City, I saw quite a number of dogs which persisted in crowding about a doorway dispersed instantly and seemingly by magic. The man appeared but for a moment at the door, and uttered no word. "Do? Oh, nothing but shake the sled harness at them. They always scatter at sight of that." Yet dogs are good travelers. One at Cudahy has come into Northwest Territory by the back door, viz., via the Mackenzie River, a desolate stretch of country and long. Still, their winter coats are warm and heavy, and the dogs don't suffer. They will sleep contentedly upon the ice. They're used to it, as the old woman who



was skinning live frogs said. The Hudson Bay Company, which did pioneer business on the Mackenzie and the Porcupine, found that the best dog for Alaskan needs was a cross of the native canine with the Scotch stag hound, the result being both hardy and fleet. By the way, a dog makes a fine foot stove of a winter night, if he will stay where it is so warm.

One peculiarity of Alaskan dogs is that they will not travel in the teeth of a wind. Neither coaxing nor abuse, not even food, will urge them to it. One man told me of starting for a trip of a couple of days, taking "grub" for that time. After going half way a wind arose, and the dogs went into shelter in a convenient gully, and with one accord refused to stir. The wind lasted four days, and so did their halt; food gave out, and they were all but frozen and starved before they reached their destination.

I never saw so many dogs before in my life as I saw in Dawson. Constantinople is the only other city, surely, that harbors such packs of them. In Dawson a dog fight excites not even a passing glance, unless it becomes a partisan affair, or involves the principal of, "Love me, love my dog." Let sleeping dogs lie, is a wise maxim there, too, for they seem to realize their importance to the body politic, and expect you to step over or walk around. It would be amusing to know just the number of canines that make headquarters at Dawson.

Excuse another of the numerous dog proverbs—"Every dog has his day." The Alaskan dog as a means of transportation has almost lived his, and must step aside; but this, as the immortal Rudyard says, is another story.



## CHAPTER XIV

### REINDEER

Transportation in Alaska will always be difficult. Railroads would be of enormous cost and little use, if built. The Great Engineer who planned the universe, who generates in His own heart the electricity that enlivens the solar system, whose simple thought directs the engine of the world, exhausting its steam from ten thousand hissing craters, may well be supposed to have had some intelligent idea in providing for the occupancy of Alaska. The wise seek to enter into that plan.

What is most striking about the topography of Alaska? The great number of rivers and their length. What animal is most useful and best adapted to life in that and similar countries? The reindeer.

Those two words, rivers and reindeer, are the natural solution of the whole problem.

Lapland, most like of all other countries to Alaska, and Eastern Siberia, contiguous to Alaska, are almost wholly dependent upon the reindeer for food, clothing and transportation. The tundras of our great possession would support 10,000,000 of these most valuable animals, for their natural food is the gray moss which is to be found almost everywhere in Alaska. This reindeer moss is a gray lichen which is itself edible, although this is not generally known as it should be in a country where starvation is often imminent. During a famine, Gustavus III. of Sweden proclaimed the fact by royal edict. Boiled, the moss has a pungent



flavor, and boiled in reindeer milk it is said to be very palatable.

Caribou, the barbarian of the family of the domestic reindeer, are found in great numbers in the fastnesses of Alaska, but the Eskimo and Indians have never subjugated them. The natives depended upon their hunting and fishing for food and of late they have suffered greatly, for the steam whalers have driven the whale to distant waters, while the reckless use of firearms by the natives themselves have greatly lessened the number of smaller animals upon which they depended for food.

Every year entire tribes suffered before summer, and many actually died of starvation; in some cases whole villages perished thus. Old people and young children were killed by the natives to save feeding them. This practice, though an old one, was growing. The revenue cutters saw much suffering when they made their rounds in the spring and the officers naturally discussed the situation. Dr. Sheldon Jackson, as commissioner of education in Alaska, travels in the North upon the *Bear*. Mr. Townsend of the fish commission and he agreed that the introduction of domesticated reindeer from Siberia would effectually solve the problem. Dr. Jackson is not "talky" but determined. That very winter, 1890-1, he attempted to interest the government, but an appropriation was refused. The liveliest thing in the United States, however, the press, with its usual perspicuity, took the matter up, and a few newspapers obtained a small sum for trying an experiment which in reality was no experiment. Then the Treasury department, co-operating with the Bureau of Education, tendered the *Bear* to transport the reindeer which Dr. Jackson had bought in Siberia, to Teller's



Island. There was no money for a herder so they were simply dumped there and left for the winter. In the spring they were found to have increased in numbers. Sympathy traveled slowly, for it is a long way, literally and figuratively, from officials in fashionable Washington to starving Eskimo on Bering Sea, so that it was 1893-4 before an appropriation was made by the government for the extension of the project, although Dr. Jackson laid himself open to the charge of being an unmitigated bore and crank in his persistence. But one must bore a hole to see through a grindstone, and it takes a crank to turn it if there's anything to be ground out. So it's plain that, although others may have had the idea first, perhaps, to Sheldon Jackson belongs the credit of this important enterprise. Apples have fallen from trees since they ripened in the Garden of Eden, and millions of men have lain upon the grass and idly wondered why, as they noted it, but to Newton belongs the honor the question brought.

There is something exhilarating in the thought that the spirit animating a good deed is a living thing which pursues its work beyond our ken; that a great idea, greatly expressed, suggests to some hearer a scope the speaker never guessed; that a noble poem bears to some mind a beauty and a message which the writer neither saw nor heard; and I firmly believe if our labor is such that we dare to pray "The work of our hands establish Thou it," that, did we stand but high enough to gain a wider view, we should say of any soul's faithful work, "He builded better than he knew." So it was with the introduction of the reindeer into Alaska. Primarily, it was intended only to afford the starving natives food and new industries. It is now seen that comparatively rapid traveling is



made possible for the miners which have since rushed in, that food may exist in plenty for a larger population than will ever reside there, and that, by means of relays, mail communications may be secured between the exiled gold hunters and their families. The complete isolation throughout eight months of the year has been until recently the hardest of all hardships and deprivations. The appropriations have hitherto been niggardly and obtained with difficulty.

The reindeer have been necessarily bought in small numbers, both from lack of money and because the Siberians would not sell but a few. In fact, though it is not at all clear to me why, the Russian government will not allow the sale of reindeer in large numbers even to us, and will not export them to any other country. Several times a native has said to Dr. Jackson, "No, I sell no more this season. Come next year. We will kill my father this winter, when you come back I sell you his." This, as one would speak of ripping up an old coat and giving you the contents of its pockets. With them it is not murder. The old are useless, they are simply mouths which cannot be filled. None of them are civilized enough to know the fear of death; as their fathers died, so do they. When an old man is to "shuffle off this mortal coil," a day is set, a feast prepared, and he himself will calmly invite you to it. Their lives are not so pleasant, poor things, that they leave with regret. Sometimes they will make a double shuffle of it, though that is to be regretted, for one feast serves for two, like the deprivation of a child whose birthday is on Christmas. "Where is So-and-So?" you ask upon your return to Siberia. "Oh," is the polite answer, "we killed him last week—what a pity you were not here." This is actual, not a joke. Thinking of the dear gray heads in the pleasantest corners of our





HERDER AND REINDEER



Figure 1 shows a 10x10 grid of small plots. Each plot represents the distribution of the number of non-zero elements in the product of two random vectors. The x-axis of each plot is the number of non-zero elements in the first vector, and the y-axis is the number of non-zero elements in the second vector. The plots show a distribution that is roughly bell-shaped, centered around 50 non-zero elements.



homes, however, the matter appears no jest, and we can but pity the little ones who have missed the blessedness of a grandmother.

There are now five herds in Alaska in charge of Laps brought over for the purpose of teaching the Eskimo the many things necessary about caring for and training the deer and making the most of every part. The Eskimo apprentices have their shelter and board beside two female deer the first year, five the second, and ten the third and every year thereafter. In this way he is apt, with the increase, to start with about fifty deer of his own. It was difficult to induce them to remain until this plan was proposed, for the native wished to return to his accustomed pursuits. Reindeer herding requires much patience. It was difficult, too, to obtain the Laps, who love their country with an exceeding devotion she hardly seems, to foreigners, to merit, and who are timid and distrustful of strangers beyond all other Europeans. But another and larger party of Laps were brought over with the reindeer during the winter—I never heard of a Lap settlement anywhere. These will replace the homesick ones who returned to Lapland with Mr. Kjellman. The Eskimo, too, will soon train their own people to handle the reindeer. The herds have increased rapidly, sixty per cent in five years. The young are born in April and May. One winter they were dropped on the ice when the thermometer stood 30° below and in half an hour they were skipping about like lambs in pleasant meadows. They are very hardy. Reindeer require no shelter, no feeding, no currying. The main trouble so far in Alaska has been from the dogs killing the deer, but they are being trained. Deer are very timid and not brilliant, their legs are slender, and when frightened they stam-



pede and break their legs, like ostriches, and have to be killed.

Like true love, reindeer ask nothing, and give their all. To the Siberians they are the most useful animal, surely, that is to be found in the world. Lieutenant Cantwell says of them:

"Reindeer furnish milk and flesh food. The marrow and tongue are delicacies; the blood and contents of the stomach are mixed for pudding, so to speak; the intestines filled with tallow make sausages; the skin is used for clothes, tents, ropes, harness, bedding, cords, fish-lines, and the stiff forelegs for covering snowshoes; the sinew is dried for thread, the bones are soaked in seal oil for fuel, the horns are made into household implements, weapons and sleds."

Now if you can mention any part of hide or hair that is wasted, I can't. As for additional uses to the civilized world, tanned reindeer skin is prized for book-binding and upholstering, the best of glue is made from the hoofs, and the hair makes the most superior life-saving apparatus, being of extraordinary buoyancy and strength. The flesh is tender and very palatable, the milk so rich and thick that it must be many times diluted before it can be drunk at all, and cheese made from it is superior. The Lap method of milking is peculiar, to say the least. Women lasso the animal, tie it, and then suck the milk, squirting it into the milk pail from their mouths. In Siberia, a whole buck costs but \$1.50, and weighs from 250 to 280 pounds.

As if all this were not enough, reindeer gladly work for a living. Their speed is thrice that of dogs, and they are faster and more docile than a horse. They travel, too, where horses could not go. As to food, they scoop up the snow several feet deep with their thick snouts and shovel-like horns, seeming to be able



to smell the moss through the snow. They eat but little at once, but take their meals like a white man, three times a day. Then they like a wink of sleep. They need no diversity of diet, and they find their own food; it does not have to be carried as does the dogs', making a material difference in the weight of an outfit for a long trip. In summer, reindeer eat any of the mosses and low greens which cover the whole of Alaska with a verdant carpet. They require no shelter even in the bitterest cold. In winter, they are not even confined, but they remain close by the huts; in summer, they have their forelegs hobbled, as they are apt to nibble along too far. They have none of the vices and all of the virtues of the burro, virtues "to burn," besides. Mr. Kjellman, superintendent of Teller station, says that when idle, he has known reindeer to be practically without food for two weeks without harm. He has never known any to freeze except a deer that was caught between rocks, though even the reindeer didn't enjoy a whole week they spent on a long trip when it was 73° below zero. The deer kept them all awake running round and round the tent. Think of it, a tent, and such weather! This was the most remarkable trip ever made by reindeer. Mr. Kjellman started from Point Clarence, near Bering Strait, December 15, 1896, and traveled a thousand miles across a trackless country, over mountains and tundras, frozen rivers and great glaciers, to the valley of the Kuskokwim, and back by April 25, 1897, to obtain mail, accompanied only by two Laps, Mik-kel Nakkela and Pehr Rist. It is one of the marvelous journeys of the world, and if William Kjellman were not one of the most modest as well as most daring of men, he would be posing as a hero with Nansen and Peary. Of his own achievements it is



almost impossible to make him speak. When I asked him about this wonderful trip of whose like the world has never known, he replied that there was nothing particular to tell. "But strange things must have happened, you must have suffered much," I persisted. "Oh no," he answered, "the journey was not extraordinary, only long." Yet, being with him for two or three weeks, I succeeded in picking up bits which proved it to be what I have asserted, one of the heroic trips of the world.

For a whole week the temperature was 73° below zero, but Kjellman concealed the fact from his companion for fear he would think it too cold to travel. They had no firewood when they stopped, for at the time they were crossing a tundra. So they broke up what sleighs they could spare. Strangely enough, the other felt chilly in spite of not knowing what the thermometer indicated and Kjellman inquired, "What's the matter with you, anyway? You must be ill—making such a fuss about cold and wearing that extra parka. Why I went without a cap when the reindeer stampeded. You better take a dose of quinine, you're out of gear."

Being in new country they didn't avoid a mossless tract, and they had carried none for their reindeer, so they traveled constantly for four days and nights without sleep, endeavoring to save the deer, and consequently, themselves. Five of the thirteen deer dropped dead with hunger and exhaustion, and the others could not have held out much longer when the scooping up of the snow announced succor at hand. Yet this was too small a matter to be readily recalled, this peril of death under a pitiless sky, hundreds of miles from another human being, and in the midst of an awful silence. It makes me shudder even to think of it.



At the "End of the Mountain," as the natives call the last of the highlands which terminate 193 miles from St. Michael, the wind rose to a shrieking gale. This place is noted for that. "I do think it's the worst spot on the globe for wind," said Mr. Kjellman. The Indians call it "The Home of the Winds." From all I hear, it must be the land office of Eolus, dealer in winds, who, having been in business since the days of Homer, ought to be able to turn out a pretty stiff article of breeze by this time. It had blown the snow quite off the rugged mountain, and so it began on the party, by sweeping one reindeer off the mountain side. "We could find no shelter and could not stand the fury of the gale, so we lay flat down on the mountain, thrust our big hunting knives into the ground between the rocks, and clung to their handles by main force the livelong night. It was hard work, too," Mr. Kjellman ended simply. This was another trifling incident of the memorable trip which had almost escaped his mind. It affected me strangely as he told it; the blackness of darkness, the roar of the blast, the desperate clinging to their knives as they hid themselves from the storm-king upon the earth which soon might cover them; it was truly dramatic.

At Anvik, even his stout frame began to quail under the continual strain, and Kjellman threw himself upon the ground in an Indian's hut and declared he was sick. The squaw took various medicinal roots, braided them, steeped, and gave the decoction to him to drink. "It cured me on the spot," laughed Kjellman, "it was the worst stuff ever compounded since Macbeth's witches brewed their potions. I recovered in sheer self-defense, for the squaw threatened me with another dose."

The Laps had steadily asserted that a deer could not be driven more than five or six days at a time, at a



speed of forty miles a day, and then have a rest of at least six weeks before going on. This was shown to be a fairy story, for the deer were driven every day on this two-thousand-mile trip. One from the station said, "To see what the deer could stand, I took two sleds and three deer, went along the river around the White Mountains, and made a distance of close to 100 miles in one run. The deer were, too, very poor, having worked hard most of the winter, and one trained only this spring." Mr. Kjellman broke all previous reindeer records by making 95 miles in one day. This demonstrates the value of reindeer for transportation purposes. No wonder that Santa Claus, having so much ground to cover in a single night, chooses reindeer in preference even to winged horses. There's always a basis of sense, depend upon it, to all our ancient lore. So many, many "Christmas trees" stand ready along the Yukon, but nuggets do not ornament them fitly. Many a successful miner, sitting in his lonely cabin at the goodwill season, would gladly sell his mine for a song, a Christmas song, if only the reindeer would bear him beside dear old Santa Claus to his own rooftree. For in loneliness of spirit he has learned that the gold of highest assay is the hair of his little child, while the dust before the home door is richer than all that piled up in Dawson.

Reindeer travel better by dark than daylight, as they are very timid and all keep together following the fastest. They never walk—don't seem to know how to, but trot rapidly and constantly. They never pace, and have a most peculiar gait, throwing their hind legs out beyond their fore legs and hunching their shoulders sideways. It would make me seasick to ride one. They sometimes, when traveling at full speed, skim their snouts along the snow and scoop up a mouthful,



like a locomotive taking up water in passage. Reindeer driving must be most exhilarating. They go straight ahead, over any obstacle, up hill and down dale with a determination to "get there" worthy of a ward politician, which reminds me of Dr. Jackson's experience. It was a dismal, drizzly day, and the six miles back to the cutter seemed to stretch into sixty. He decided to ride back on a sled over the wet and slippery tundra. With a Lap at the head of each deer, for the reindeer were fresh, to steady them, he started. There was a little ravine ahead, perhaps ten feet wide; the deer took matters into their own hands by leaping across. Now the worthy doctor is not a rider to hounds, besides, the reindeer had not informed him that they meant to "take the ditch," so they and their reverend driver parted company hurriedly, and without words of farewell. The doctor turned a fantastic somersault in no wise comporting with the dignity of the moderator of the Presbyterian assembly—the onlookers insist it was a double somersault—and landed unhurt, but greatly surprised, on some bushes in the bottom of the ravine. Decidedly, it gave him quite a turn. "Now doctor," said I, when he told me about it, "honestly, I won't tattle, but was your language seemly to one of your cloth?" "I made no remarks whatever," he replied, "I was bereft of speech or breath to frame it. The young lieutenant who had accompanied me from the *Bear* just threw himself down in a transport and howled. As soon as I got together enough fragments of breath to join in, I did so. It was one of the funniest things I ever saw, if the joke was on myself."

In Finland, Mr. Kjellman has seen horses and reindeer race against each other. There seemed to be no best man. In Norway, horses wear snowshoes, but no



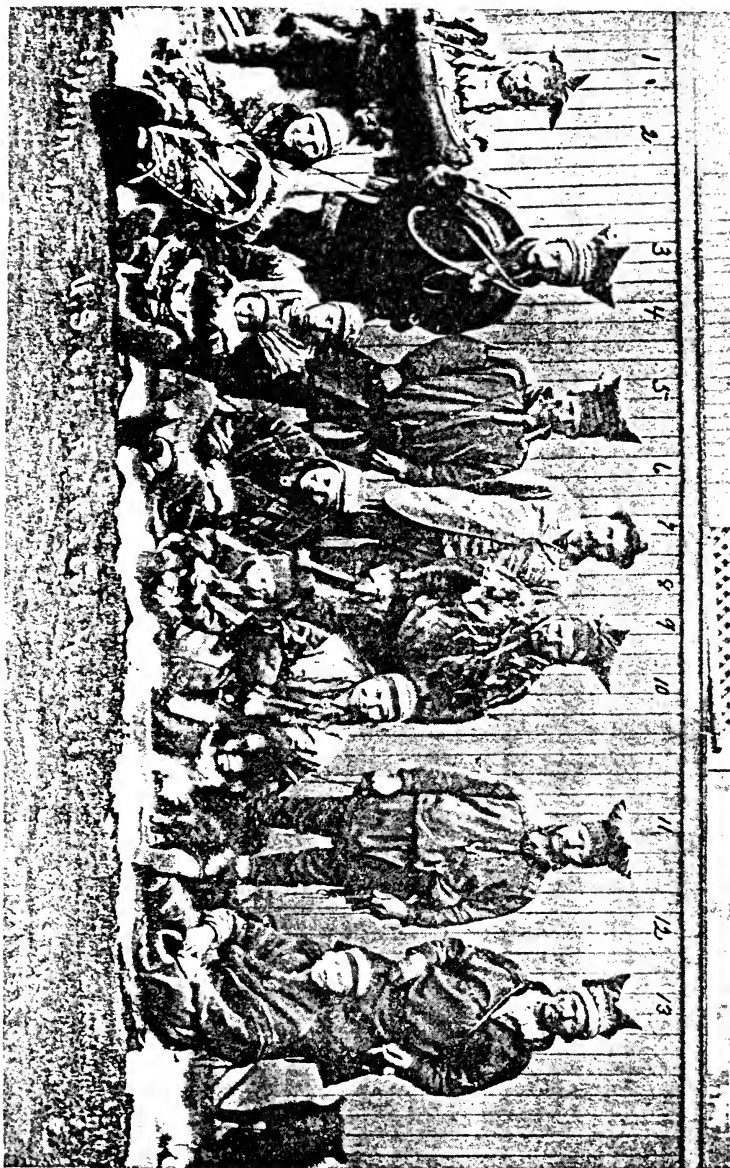
one seems to have attempted that in Alaska. These snowshoes are made of roots about the size of a lead pencil, curved the size of a chair bottom. In Siberia, north of the Amour and in Kamchatka, reindeer are saddled over the shoulders and ridden. They carry heavy packs, but around Bering Strait this has never been done, and although the deer are strong to draw, they sink to their knees if even a small man mounts them.

Reindeer are hitched to one trace, with a simple harness over the shoulders and straps outside to the belly band. There is neither halter nor bit; they are driven with one line or two. The deer spring so eagerly that the sleds are made wide and short. An ordinary load is two hundred pound to a deer, and forty miles a day the average easy travel. At Port Clarence, one of the important reindeer stations, there is no wood for fifteen miles around. All the fuel was hauled that distance by them. Two deer were hitched to a log laid upon two sleds and easily brought it to the station, though one log measured seventy-two feet by eighteen inches. At Port Clarence alone, eighteen deer have been broken to drive.

While we were at St. Michael, Dr. Jackson received the 1897 reports from his reindeer stations, and very kindly allowed me to read them, and take down what I wished. The following is an extract from one written at Golovin Bay, about 100 miles north of St. Michael's Island. It is interesting in matter and quaint in its foreign English, which I quote verbatim:

"The consistence of herders has been three Eskimo besides the Laplander family. They all lived in tent during summer. In the fall we had a house erected in the woods where they have lived during winter, compared with tent, very comfortable. I





W. A. KILLMAN AND THE LAPP-ANDERS







made a large sheet iron stove. (One learns to use his hands in Alaska.) The Lap many times expressed his desire to be able to have it so comfortable at home in Lapland. (Great heavens, what an ideal!) We have ourselves made two trips for birchwood this winter and hauled some logs overland from Chiucuk, two trips to Port Clarence and at least two trips a week have been made between the herding camp and station, twenty miles away, to obtain provisions and reports from the herd."

(What a winter of wild dissipation and gadding they have passed. Dr. Jackson should put an end to this.)

He goes on to say:

"We have four trained Lap dogs, but they are unfortunately all females, so we have no view of any increase of that kind. The Lap sold one male puppy, and to play a trick he took the other along with him."

Reindeer are now loaned to the missions in herds of fifty for three years. The increase are retained by the missions. This will be of great benefit.

Some reindeer have stone-colored coats with beards, like buffaloes, growing down their breasts in truly patriarchal style; these of gray. Others are spotted, quaker gray and white, and the hair is thick and soft. If the animal is killed in early fall, the pelt will retain the hair, otherwise it will soon come out in tufts. These skins make pretty rugs. They are tanned in a peculiar way, by being chewed all over the skin by the Eskimo women, who make them into their Sunday-go-to-meeting gowns, or parkas. The most highly prized for attire, though, are taken from unborn reindeer. These skins are made into beautiful garments, for the Eskimo are really expert furriers. I have one of these parkas. The skin is as soft as velvet, points of some close white fur are set neatly in for collars, and a wolfskin fringe protects the face and



makes a pretty edge to the hood. It's just the thing for sleighriding and very handsome, though rather conspicuous. These skins are traded to the Alaskan Eskimo by the Siberian brethren or the officers of the *Bear*, and are in great demand among Indians who can afford them up the Yukon.

W. A. Kjellman, by the way, is a character. He is a tall, broad, brawny, handsome Norwegian, with bluest of eyes shaded by heavy lashes, and blackest of hair and beard, which, when in the wilds he wears in a wavy mass, but in his occasional visits to civilization pompadour as to hair, and pointed as to beard, like a Frenchman. He has traveled most of the cold world over, but does not like warm climates. He has been in charge of the Teller reindeer station for three years. Mr. Kjellman (his name is pronounced Shellman, by the way) speaks Norwegian, Lap, Malamute, Eskimo, English, and as a finish, Finnish. You can tell by the look of him that he's strong as an ox. He can get up an appetite for breakfast by a little run of fourteen or fifteen miles on the skis, he can skate as a swallow skims, swim like a fish, and sail a boat with an admiral. One time in Norway, when only a lad, he was three times upset in the icy fiord in a morning, so stormy was it. He looks like a typical Viking, except for the boast and swagger we associate with those of old. A relative of his, also named Kjellman, was with Nordensjold when he discovered the Northwest Passage.

Mr. Kjellman's home is in Wisconsin, at least his wife and two children reside there. His baby girl was fourteen months old before he knew she was born, and he didn't know her name till he saw her last fall on his way to Lapland. In his home are stores of valuable curios, one room being stocked with them, for Mr. Kjellman is a keen observer upon his wide travels.



Among other things he has a unique and very valuable spoon made entirely of jade, which he obtained in Siberia. There also he bought a string of curious dark blue beads, which are so highly valued by the natives that he with difficulty secured the string for \$43, one bead costing \$18. This, to them, is as great a price as that paid for the famous Portland vase. He has a belt made of two thousand reindeer teeth, a wonderful piece of ivory puppet carving, of which more anon, a cap made entirely of muskrat tails, another formed of the flippers of seal pups. He brought his wife a curious fur carpet 12x14 feet, upon which an Eskimo woman worked all winter at Port Clarence. It contains nine hundred pieces of fur, alternately light and dark, cut diamond-shaped, and sewed with reindeer sinew. The border, ten inches wide, is of squares. There are selected skins from all the fur-bearing animals to be found on land or sea which Mr. Kjellman has traversed. This carpet is not only unique, but very handsome. He presented little Serene with a Siberian cap of light colored fur made entirely of the skin from the paws, which gives it a pretty, wavy look. To me he gave a silvery "leopard seal" skin and a large seal-thong seine, with which the natives catch anything, from a smelt to a seal, or even a white whale.

Mr. Kjellman is the right man in the right place evidently, and should be connected with the United States Ethnological Bureau, which, by the way, under the able direction of Major Powell, is doing an invaluable service to this country in obtaining and preserving the myths and history of our passing peoples. There's nothing Mr. Kjellman enjoys more than exploring new countries and studying new peoples, which his linguistic attainments render comparatively easy. He is now anxious to penetrate the interior between Point



Barrow and Norton Sound, where, the coast Eskimo say, live a tribe who still use nothing but stone implements, have never seen a white man, and will be well worth a careful study. Would I could accompany him!

In this connection, W. S. Phillips has done much toward preserving myths and information about the tribes of Southeast Alaska and the coast Indians in his "Totem Tales." Mr. Phillips speaks their language and so obtains his stories first-handed, and illustrates them himself.



## CHAPTER XV

### SHELDON JACKSON'S MONUMENT

"But I did not know Dr. Jackson was dead!"

Nor is he, yet he has long been building his monument of living stones, quarried and squared after the fashion of those composing the walls of the New Jerusalem. To a man who departs this life leaving nothing but his money, it is fitting that the heir erect a goodly shaft, else would his very name perish from the earth; the lower, more sensual, more selfish the life, the higher, more chaste the marble, the lovelier the figure of Charity at its top. The granite block over many a grave is not colder nor harder than was the heart of him who lies beneath, nor more highly polished than the manners which served only to reflect self, that self "with none so poor to do him reverence," though the stone records virtues at which the skull below grins, and grief at which it sneers. Though costing enough to build a shelter for hundreds of homeless children, one of the marble houses fronting the Fifth Avenue of Death is very small compared to that wherein the family live uptown. Yet 'tis large enough, for

"They do neither feast nor wed  
In the city of the dead,  
In the city where they sleep away the hours."

She was a society leader. 'Tis only her body that takes room in this abode, her soul could be lost at sea in a single tear. But dear me, souls are horribly *passée*. In death as in life, however,



she is exclusive. Her stately charnel house scorns the cheap little stone in the hollow which bears upon the lintel of her last lowly home, the simple name, "Mother." In Greenwood, a mausoleum costing \$400,000 is now nearly completed. It will be heated and lighted by electricity, yet the corpse will lie as cold and dark as if he were only a slum child trying to sleep on the stones of an alley. At the jeweled altar a priest will minister who might better be going into the highways and byways and compelling them to come in, into this exquisite tomb to get warmed with all this \$400,000 worth of beauty.

Even the costly bronze statue erected to a hero serves rather to memorialize the money of the man who seeks mainly to cut his own name upon the pediment, and who poses as an admirer of a man whose aims, in life, he would have decried as visionary, foolhardy or Quixotic.

From all the hypocrisy, ostentation and waste of a fashionable cemetery—yea, even cemeteries become modish and are patronized by "our very best people," even the marble angels on the monuments hide their faces or point up and away from it all, while the real angels veil their faces with their wings as they pass. They know that "our very best people" more likely lie low in the grasses of the potter's field, at a fork in the roads where the suicide is impaled, or even in the jail yards.

It was not of such monuments I thought when I spoke of Sheldon Jackson's, and the inscription is as fitting now as it will be when the final date can be added; the first is 1834. It was in that year that a baby in a New York town started the world well by being well born, for until men cease breeding fine stock and horses, it is absurd to deny that blood tells.



Sheldon's maternal grandfather was an eminent physician who served six terms as the speaker of the New York state assembly and the last who wore the official cocked hat. He was a man of affairs, and regent of the University. The paternal grandfather was the associate of De Witt Clinton in building the Erie Canal and one of its commissioners. Sheldon graduated from Union College, Schenectady, and from Princeton Theological Seminary at twenty-four. He graduated, took orders and married all in one week; it was "commencement" indeed of a busy life. He wished to go to Siam or to Bogota, South America, but the board considered him lacking in physique, so they appointed him instead missionary to Indian Territory where, after a year, he succumbed to malaria, and was removed to the home mission field of Wisconsin and Minnesota, then frontier. I think that board would be rather surprised to see him now after just forty years' service, compared to which Siam's would have been being "carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease." He can endure more hardship, travel, hard work and exposure this minute than half the college football players, and he looks ten years younger than his sixty-four years. After five years' missionary work he was appointed to a pastorate in Rochester, Minnesota, where he remained another five, serving upon the Christian commission in the hospitals of Alabama and Tennessee in the fall of 1863. Next he was put in charge of all the mission work west of Missouri, except Kansas. Sheldon Jackson is a worker. I have traveled with him for weeks at a time, and I have never seen him idle for a minute. He never hurries, but just persists. Evidently he was always so. Within three days after his appointment to this wide field, and the one railroad into it was not yet open, he



had missionaries on the way, and that year he traveled over 20,000 miles establishing churches and encouraging schools. A year later he was appointed superintendent of missions from Canada to Mexico. There were no railroads, his journeys were taken horseback, on lumbering stagecoaches, prairie schooners, or creaking oxcarts; through pelting sleet, fierce blizzards, drenching rains and burning winds; over rugged mountains, monotonous prairies, glaring deserts and swollen torrents. He slept where he could, ate what he could get and worked steadily. He averaged 25,000 miles a year of this sort of thing. One year it reached 37,000. Once he traveled three hundred miles on a Mexican oxcart with slices of trees for wheels, the most execrable vehicle in the world. It seems to me I'd prefer being an old style martyr, and be drawn and quartered. All this time his salary was the pittance doled out to "spiritual circuit-riders." He is a most domestic man, yet he could seldom visit his family who had removed to Denver to be somewhere near him.

Nor were perils from men wanting. Indians fired into the steamer upon which he traveled on the upper Missouri. Once he escaped by only a few hours from the murderous Apache on the warpath. But the most exciting of all his experiences was the narrow escape of himself and his wife from both Apaches and Mexicans when they went to get some Indian children to take to school. They traveled a hundred miles on a construction train, for the Union Pacific was not completed, and entered a little border town where all the population were aroused and most of them drunk. Four Mexicans, horribly mutilated by the Apaches, had just been brought in dead, and the "greasers" swore Dr. Jackson should not take the "devils' brats" away. They should die. He telegraphed for a loco-



motive to bear them off, but there was none to be had. He tried to induce the train men to start at once. This they would not do. All they would do was to run the train into the yards. He locked the doors, and they lay flat on the floor, listening with palpitating hearts to the howling of an enraged mob of fully four hundred drunken Mexicans, and expecting to end their mission at the hands of the maddened brutes. But they were not found, and two hours after they had left their immediate danger behind. All this takes genuine courage, and Dr. Jackson is a small man, not physically strong.

For ten years, from 1869 to 1880, he edited and published the *Rocky Mountain Presbyterian*. When I once asked Dr. Jackson if he had written any poems or hymns, he replied that he believed that if his life were the stake he could not compose a single couplet of the veriest doggerel. But he has always written much for publications of all kinds, and has been burdened with wide correspondence, constant preaching and lecturing, and conferences of all kinds.

In 1879 Dr. Jackson was instrumental in organizing the Woman's executive committee. Like most men who have had helpful wives, he has the greatest respect for progressive women. Of his four children but two, daughters, lived. One of them, Delia Sheldon Jackson; is a lawyer, and the younger, Elizabeth Leslie Jackson, is an artist, who, by the way, made a careful study of the flora of Alaska, and painted hundreds of watercolor studies, the first work of the kind done for Alaska.

In 1880, Dr. Jackson was sent to Alaska as superintendent of missions to natives sunk in the grossest superstition. He frequently went East, where the government found him most valuable in suggesting plans and



giving information about our possessions there. He had for some time urged the matter of better conditions when in Washington, but it was not till Benjamin Harrison, a friend of his, was appointed to the Senate Committee on Territories that the desired enactments were passed giving Alaska limited territorial government and some very limited educational advantages. Funds for the latter were so meager that Dr. Jackson suggested a religious conference, which was held in New York, to apportion the districts for denominational schools. The Commissioner of the Bureau of Education consulted Dr. Jackson, naturally, at every turn, and in 1885 the latter was appointed United States Commissioner of Education in Alaska. With his usual sense and promptness, he started at once to organize schools at all important points, and to Christianize and educate the natives, whom the Russians had sought to kill off by tribes by introducing small-pox among the Indians. Dr. Jackson's work in Sitka and throughout Southeastern Alaska is little short of wonderful. He established *The North Star* at Sitka in 1887, built a church and founded an industrial training school. A man of learning, he saw the value of the preservation of the customs, traditions and history of the Indians and their country, and organized the Alaskan Society of Natural History and Ethnology at Sitka, and erected a museum there. In every way this quiet, unassuming, clear-sighted man has influenced for good and for progress the development of Alaska. He has steadily opposed the introduction of liquor among the natives, the profligacy of the whites in their treatment of native women, and the incompetent and grasping officials that have been a disgrace to the administration. He is therefore most cordially hated by many people in Alaska, and has been subjected to



numerous annoyances, even to being imprisoned on a silly charge in Sitka. He can afford to disregard all this, with such success as has attended his work confronting him. Look, for instance, at that full-blooded Indian from Sitka's school, Edward Morrison, who has graduated from Marietta College, Ohio, and Lane Theological Seminary, Cincinnati. While studying for the ministry, he also studied law and was admitted to preach and to practice—excuse the pun—at the same time when but twenty-four years old. He is an intellectual giant, yet, like Nehemiah of old, “works with both hands earnestly.” He has thoroughly mastered several trades, is a carpenter, shoemaker, cooper, and musician. He composes, and adapts scores from piano to cornet. He played at the World's Columbian Exposition. Like a Japanese he watches and tries everything. This Spring he will go to the tribes at Cape Fox and Fort Tongas. Then there is Henry Phillips from Juneau, who is an expert machinist, can construct a locomotive and run it. Such are the living stones which build an enduring monument. Dr. Jackson regrets that he is no linguist and feels that he might, personally, have learned so much more of the peoples among whom he has worked if he could speak their languages. The most proficient in this regard among his workers, he says, is Mrs. E. S. Willard, who, with her husband, labored for twelve years among the Indians near Sitka, and talks Thlinget perfectly. She is now in Chicago studying dentistry.

“The Presbyterian Training School is the ‘City of Refuge’ for those fleeing from death—the ‘House of Hope’ to those sitting in the habitations of cruelty—the ‘House of Help’ to the starving, homeless, friendless waif—an asylum to the escaped slave—the protector of helpless girlhood.



A few years ago a little girl was accused of witchcraft. The tribe bound her with a rope. A stalwart chief, holding one end of the rope, walked in advance, dragging the child after him, while another came behind holding the other end of the rope. These men were the admiration of the tribe for their bravery in holding between them a puny, starved girl of ten. She was rescued by Professor Austin, who was in charge of the school, and given a home. A girl of fourteen, when about to be sold into a life of sin, for the benefit of a distant relative, escaped from her grandmother who was guarding her, and found a refuge in the school. Another, a girl of about seventeen, was being sold for similar purposes by her stepmother and aunt. The two women, quarreling over the division of the money, came to settle the dispute before the clerk of the court, who took the girl from her unnatural protectors and placed her in the school. Another was the slave of a prominent chief. After his death his two widows treated her so cruelly that she ran away, and was found hidden under a house. She was taken into the school and furnished protection and a home. A man that married one of the widows claimed her as his property, and tried to get possession of her, but in vain. The school was her protector. Another, to prevent being married to her stepfather and becoming a plural wife with her own mother, ran away and came to the school. For a long time she did not dare visit her mother, and when at length she ventured to visit home, they locked her up in a room to keep her. After some days she again escaped and returned to the school for shelter. A girl of fifteen and her sister, ten years of age, were picked up on the beach at a mining camp. They were without friends or home, almost without clothing, and in a starving condition. Through neglect and cruel treatment the younger one was almost blind. These orphan sisters were taken into the school, fed, clothed, and kindly cared for. Medical attendance was provided, and the blind one restored to sight.

Among the boys, one had been sold as a slave twice before he was brought to the school. Another had



been shot as a slave and a bullet sent crushing through his shoulder. A third had been tied up as a witch and kept four days without food, when he was rescued. Another when born, was about to be killed by his parents to save the trouble of taking care of him. A neighboring woman took pity on the baby and removed him to her own house. When the school commenced he was placed in it. Many others have come under the protection of the school through trials and dangers.

And all along the coast if a child is to be sold into slavery, or is in danger of being tortured to death as a witch, or forced into a life of sin, they know that if they can escape and reach the Presbyterian Mission School at Sitka they are safe."

This is a strange state of affairs in a Christian country. When the Russians owned Alaska, they first baptized the native women, often young children, that their lust might not be contaminated by contact with pagans. American whalers and miners treat the natives no better, but omit the impious baptism. Missionaries should be sent to the whites, I think.

Marriages among the Indian pupils are greatly to be desired, that neither husband nor wife may be hampered by a heathen. Dr. Jackson therefore started a model village at Sitka. If any of the mission natives wish to marry, a loan of \$350 is made, for which they give notes payable in annual installments of \$70 without interest. This pays for materials for house only; it is erected by the man. Girls are thoroughly trained in sewing and housework, so that his wife can make the most of what they have. There are already eight of these houses, five of them entirely paid for.

A normal department for training native teachers is much needed at this large and prosperous school, which has fourteen buildings. But as Dr. Jackson tersely said, "Men who wouldn't give a cent to a civil-



izing school or a starving Indian will not grudge twenty dollars to get one drunk." "Have the Indians ever turned against you, doctor?" "Never, except strange ones. I have had to rush for a stockade, years ago, and I have ridden all day among the Sioux with a loaded rifle across my knees while on my way to proclaim the gospel of peace, but I have always found the Indians I knew, grateful."

For many years Dr. Jackson has enjoyed the pleasures of home but a short time in mid-winter. Every Spring now he takes the earliest ship north and comes out on the latest, going the rounds of the government schools and reindeer stations to the northernmost land on this continent, Point Barrow, where he established a school in 1890. Mrs. Elliott F. Shepard of New York furnished the money for this. Dr. Jackson has often been aboardship frozen in the ice of the Arctic. He is a bad sailor, and dislikes the constant travel, but I don't think anybody ever heard him volunteer the information. Whatever he has to do he accomplishes without reference to liking or disliking. Yet he always finds time to be helpful to others. How many times when I was ingloriously seasick has he amused my tiny daughter, cutting out paper dolls with small folding scissors from his pocket—he carries everything, I never saw such a man—or drawing pictures, or submitting to "bear hugs" with the utmost patience. Not a person aboard, I think, but received some little courtesy from him. Up the Yukon one of the ladies lost her comb and was in despair. The doctor said nothing but disappeared and returned with a comb. "I always carry several," he explained. Another time it was insect powder; another, absorbent cotton, and so on; there seemed to be nothing he had not, and always in sufficient quantities to spare, even



patience. At every stop he obtained earth, flowers, shrubs, etc., for the Agricultural Department at Washington, and was running over with information.

These various schools at such unheard of places are extremely interesting. Dr. Jackson's account of the beginning of that at Point Hope on the Arctic Ocean, about 300 miles south of Point Barrow, is especially so:

"The school was opened on the 1st of October, 1890. The day brought with it a blizzard and snow storm that lasted for nine days. During the morning the teacher occupied the schoolroom alone, but as time wore on and no pupils came he put on his furs and started for the village to hunt up the children. He found a boy walking the beach. Taking him into the schoolroom, he commenced school. At its close he presented his pupil with a couple of pan-cakes left from his own breakfast. The effect was equal to any reward of merit. That boy proved one of the most regular in attendance during the entire winter season. The next morning four presented themselves, and from that the school grew to 68. A mixture of flour, molasses, and water made a sort of cake, a little of which was given to the pupils each evening, proving not only a very cheap and efficient method of securing regular attendance, and promoting discipline, as they had to be both present and perfect in their deportment and recitations to be entitled to cake. The scholars usually arrived from six to seven in the morning and remained all day. The sun disappeared on the 10th of December and returned on the 3d of January, giving them a night of twenty-four days. Lamps were required in the schoolroom from November 12 to February 9. During February and a portion of March a series of blizzards set in that were beyond description. The ice was solid across the ocean to Cape Prince of Wales, 200 miles distant. The effect of the gales was such that at times it seemed as if the schoolhouse must be blown away. Snow flew in perfect sheets. The schoolhouse was located two miles from the village, and yet, notwithstanding the storms and distance, the attendance was



good. For a few days the teacher hired men to see the little ones safely home through the storm (the two miles distance), but soon found that the precaution was unnecessary; that they were accustomed to take care of themselves."

Dr. Jackson visits these Arctic stations on the revenue cutter *Bear*, which has a noble reputation for life-saving in those icy waters. The *Bear* was built in Scotland for a whaler. She rescued Greeley's party after the disastrous Lady Franklin Bay expedition, and has since been in revenue cutter service. Her chief officer, Captain Tuttle, was an officer in the navy during the Civil War. He is a soldierly-looking man, and Dr. Jackson speaks highly of his courtesy and that of the other officers aboard the *Bear* when he makes his long and frequent trips.

Some of the Alaskan schools were founded in queer ways, notably that at Circle City. In 1895, this was a large and populous mining town and it was felt that a school should be started. Dances seemed to be the pleasantest and quickest way of raising funds. Now a dance at Circle City would hardly strike one as an educational event, the "gentlemen" being miners in their working clothes and the "ladies" prostitutes and squaws. This, however, is the curious bill rendered in the teacher's report to the Commissioner of Education:

Dance, Dec. 18, 1895.....	\$348
"    "    23    "    .....	706 70
Cash.....	10*
Dance, Sept. 25, 1896.....	\$276 50
"    Oct. 11    "    .....	236 55
"    Dec. 11    "    .....	137

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\$1,714 75

\* I should like to know who gave that, and why?

"Against this, for building, store, etc., and wood,





DR. SHELDON JACKSON IN SUMMER ARCTIC ATTIRE







teacher for three months last year, \$2,258.82.—Balance on books of A. C. Cr., \$544.07."

In her report Miss Fulcomer says:

"In June it suddenly grew intensely hot. All kinds of bugs and worms began to crawl out of the chinking between the logs, sometimes enough to make one's flesh creep. In winter the children straggle in sleepily from 10:30 till noon, and seem to be in a sort of torpor . . . I can do the sweeping, cleaning, filling lamps, etc., but a fire maker is a necessity."

For Work's sake, what for? Does she expect to do nothing for the munificent stipend she receives? Some people are so unreasonable, but perhaps she will explain. She goes on to say:

"I cannot stand the cold and hard work of carrying wood, cutting kindling, etc."

She herself paid for a fire shovel and broom to clean the snow off the roof, for when it was melting, the roof leaked so that there was scarcely a dry spot in the room. When they had some money, enthusiasm gave out, and they wanted to put it into a dance hall. She very sensibly concludes:

"When the population of a town may be there one month and the next month a hundred or a thousand miles away, the school should be entirely in the hands of the government."

It was just before Dr. Jackson went to Alaska last year that he was elected moderator of the Presbyterian assembly. How he finds time to accomplish all he does, even with the extraordinary industry I have often noted, is more than I understand. Several years ago he published a book, "Alaska, or Missions on the North Pacific Coast." He has also saved and invested money inherited by both himself and his wife, so that he is comfortably well off. He would have more if he had not given \$50,000 to establish a



Christian college in Salt Lake City. Dr. Jackson has a pleasant home in Washington, filled with many rare things gathered during his long service in far lands. The last time I saw him he was congratulating himself that he was nearing home and family, but it was not long after that he was on his way to Lapland for reindeer for the government relief expedition. I asked him one day what of all the varied achievements of his life he reckoned most useful. He replied, "My part in introducing domestic reindeer into Alaska."

As for the inscription on his monument, methinks it might well be the account another rough rider for Christianity gave of himself many centuries ago. And Paul's words singularly apply to this man who has never had an easy berth or a "fashionable charge," or a big salary:

"In labors abundant, in prisons more frequent, in journeyings often, in peril of waters, in peril of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils among false brethren."

"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold . . . Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."



## CHAPTER XVI

### RESOURCES FOR PERMANENT SETTLEMENT IN ALASKA

How fortunate that tastes vary. "What can he see in that girl?" exclaims every other fellow in Tom's set, yet he says in a rapture, "O darling, I feared you would marry Dick or Harry,"—Dick worships that "scraggy" Miss Belmont, and Harry adores that "pudgy" Miss Davis. The adjectives are Tom's. One man strides joyously through the snow, inhaling with delight long breaths of tingling cold; another loves the burning sun upon him as he does the eyes of his sweetheart. So every Jack has his Jill, and every country its patriots. A cold, reserved beauty may possess charms apart from her wealth, and since I have seen Alaska, I feel that the fortune-hunters who have crowded one another to secure her gold, have not learned her gifts and graces, as her real lovers know them.

The fact is, Alaska will eventually support a considerable permanent population dependent in no way upon its mines. Norway and Lapland have few advantages over it. Dr. Dawson, with full knowledge and after careful investigations, asserts that this great Northwest is capable of sustaining a large pastoral and agricultural population. Its climate and conditions are about the same as those of Vologda, a Russian province of 155,498 square miles, with a population of 1,161,000. Alaska contains 577,390 square miles.

The climate has been maligned. To be sure there are eight months of winter, and it is a steady, intense cold which has been known to touch 72° below zero,



but that is most unusual, the average being probably 40° higher, and a dry cold. I have heard several people who have lived in both countries say that Alaska's cold is not more severe than Montana's. It is certainly moderating, too, in Alaska, if the oldest inhabitants are trustworthy. When "old Komkoff," the Russian, first came to the mouth of the Yukon fully forty years ago, he swears the ice was seven feet thick. "Every year," the queer old man said to me, using his small English vocabulary haltingly, aided by gestures, "ice he grow thinner," measuring lower and lower with his great hand, "now only so," about four feet, "soon I break through." I think Komkoff is in no danger of falling through the ice in Alaska during his lifetime, however, when it is true that miners in the now abandoned silver mines at Golovin Bay, only a hundred miles north of St. Michael, found the ground frozen solid for ninety-six feet straight down below the surface. During the extreme cold it is impossible to fire a gun. The very oil freezes about the lock. Throw a basin of water into the air and the drops will fall hail. Spit, and an icicle will be instantly formed.

The worst of the winter, all admit, is the darkness. As the summer wanes, the nights grow dark, and the moon and stars again appear. The days shorten, darkness falling earlier, and dawn coming later. For six days from December 22, the winter solstice, no sun appears, and for six weeks it shows itself only on fine days, lazily beginning work at ten in the morning and knocking off at two in the afternoon. Of course in Northern Alaska it is even worse. This and the dry, exhilarating cold make a "nervous climate." By spring, people are actually pallid, like grass struggling along in a cellar. There are always compensations though, it is in winter that the magnificent



Aurora Borealis lights the heavens with a beauty like that which must shine from the gate above to guide earth wanderers in. The stars gleam like diamond spangles upon the robe of night; ribbons of gorgeous color float shimmering down it, moons as many as affrighted the soothsayers of Cæsar hold conclave, and not only the sky but the lower air seems quivering with joyous lights and colors which silently dance and play, pursue and evade, not dreaming that their vagaries are seen of man, so solitary are rugged mountain, frozen river, and far-stretching tundra, lying lifeless under a pall as of glistening white samite. Oh, the marvelous, mysterious beauty of an Arctic night! ✓

The summer temperature averages as high as in the States, sometimes reaching 100° in the shade, yet in many places are great glaciers covered with dense vegetation growing upon silt deposited upon the ice, and when I was in St. Michael last, a woman was buried in frozen ground only three feet below the smiling tundra, gay with wild flowers. Summer comes suddenly and in all her glory. Then is Alaska like unto Paradise, for there is no night there, neither moon nor stars. Above the Arctic Circle, where one third Alaska lies, the sun shines through the live-long night, and even below the Circle the glory of his departure and the grandeur of his quick return mingle in a strange beauty. I have sat reading by my window in Alaska long past midnight, and have laid aside the book to watch the flood of crimson and purple bathing the mountains till their sharp outlines seemed all unreal. As I watched it, sorrow and care, disappointments and perplexities softened too, and became unreal, while in their place was a great peace.

The sun dogs are a phenomenon of Alaska in summer. Sometimes several may be seen at once. It is



odd, too, that at nightfall, as we would say at home, a sudden chill comes into the air and a slight breeze arises as if darkness had really fallen. It must be the passing of the ghost of the night that is dead. The effect of the constant day is to rush vegetation in a marvelous way. "Come, come," says the sun, "be up and doing. Your time is short. Remember the night cometh when no plant doth grow." So the garden never sleeps, and although the season is short the Pinkerton vegetables mature as well as in the States. In Alaska it is not necessary to follow the example of the man who crossed his bees with lightning-bugs so that they might work all night.

A larger proportion of Alaska is arable than you would think, and the soil is immensely fertile. It is covered with peat, black as ink. The earth is in many places too rich, in fact, and is better after being worked. For fifty miles along the river from Fort Yukon to Circle City extends a tract of land several miles wide in its narrowest part, which is probably one of the garden spots of the world. Vegetables of all kinds would mature there, growing to large size, and possessing unusual flavor and sweetness. If some of the foolish who are thronging to Alaska to mine, were to turn their knowledge of market gardening to advantage, they would realize sure fortunes, whereas they are bound to almost as sure failure. Nothing is now grown in Alaska for sale. It is one of the greatest deprivations of the miners that no fresh fruit or vegetables are obtainable. They would pay large prices for them. A very small "pack" of seeds would make a man rich if, instead of delving deep for gold, he would "tickle the earth with a hoe till she laughed with a harvest." The boats would gladly buy of the gardeners and the returns from a small patch in one summer would be



sufficient to live upon for prospecting in the winter, if a man still determined to mine. Until now, no one has had time for farming nor gardening, though the missions have grown vegetables for their own use in a small way. They have been unable to procure seed, as they wished, and most of it was poor, but several of their gardens were successes last year. There was a very good one at Holy Cross Mission—two, in fact, one terraced up the side hill and one at the bottom, so that if the season were dry or wet, one garden would be satisfied. Father Ragaru accompanied us up the mountain. It was pretty steep, but the peas and beans climbed blithely without losing their breath, and the cucumbers ran along without a puff. When we returned to the *Healy*, Sister Mary Joseph gave us turnips, potatoes, lettuce and radishes, which the Indian boys carried down to the boat. How fresh they did look, and how the miners would have feasted on them, but they were kept for the sick woman. Turnips are particularly good and grow large there. They are called "Yukon apples" and can be raised in great quantities. I ate one of these "apples" raw at Fort Cudahy, I remember, with infinite relish. It is surprising how soon anything fresh becomes a luxury. This turnip tasted as good as the rutabagas we children used to eat when we played house. One of the traders told me that "Jack" McQuesten raised ten tons of turnips the year the *Arctic* sunk. They were about all they had to live on for a while. The quantity sounds large, but he insisted it was true. This was at Forty-Mile.

Across Forty-Mile Creek, at Fort Cudahy, I saw a very nice garden containing both vegetables and flowers. It is a communal affair. Each works a little in the garden, and everyone eats of the fruit thereof,



which reminds me that fruit trees are not seen in Alaska, not only because of the short season, but because their roots would go too deep and strike ice.

Mr. Ogilvie, D. L. S., surveyed for a man named Gibson an island in Forty-Mile delta, which, he said, would raise anything for market gardens. Potatoes of the far North taste like Bermudas, and thrive well. Onions only do not mature enough to be kept over winter, and spinach grows so rapidly that it is apt to seed before it is fit to eat. Gardens are planted about the middle of June. They require no watering for there is frost not far below upon which they can draw for moisture. The devouring insects of civilization will not reach Alaska much ahead of appendicitis and heart failure, so that market gardens will have little to contend with beside barbarian weeds and mosquitoes. They say mosquitoes, like other savages, die with civilization's triumph, but I fear they will not disappear until the cutworms, *et al.*, arrive, so that it will prove a choice between coal bills and ice, so to speak.

As to small fruits, Alaska is one big berry field. In summer the children of the world could fill their little pails with every sort of berry that grows, I think. So thick are the wild strawberry blossoms about Mount St. Elias that you would imagine the snow still whitened the ground. The Yukon blueberries, longish and a trifle tart, show the tame, tasteless ones of the States what they should be. Red currants and black ones, too, are plentiful as disappointments, but a heap more relishing; so are raspberries and dewberries. Mooseberries look like currants, but the leaves appear dewy. I'm quite willing that moose should eat them all, and any other animal, as far as I'm concerned, may freely partake of the kinnikinnicks, whose sole characteristic is mealiness. Salmon berries ripen when the



salmon run. They resemble a yellow raspberry in size and color. I never think of them without recalling an official's wife who had recently come to Alaska. Stepping into a skiff one day she saw what she supposed to be the new berry on a seat, and put it into her mouth. It proved to be an egg from a salmon roe, fully ripened by the sun. Old friends are best, old books, old wine; but eggs, especially fish eggs, are best in their early youth. To this day Mrs. C—— rarely eats salmon berries, for they recall a reminiscent flavor she would fain forget.

Cranberries of several varieties are very plentiful. Most of them are low bush, but in the new barracks at Dawson, I saw some growing upon a pretty vine which at first I took for wintergreen.

In early summer wild roses make the whole country gay and sweet while they bloom, and have hips and haws—I never know one from the other—which grow large and are eaten by the Indians. I used to nibble the coral things, too, chiefly because they are pretty. There is money to be made in gathering and selling all these berries. Both miners and boats eagerly buy them, but the Indians will not gather them in quantities, and everyone else is too busy. If sugar and cane were plenty, there would be a good deal of money to be made by women in preserving the berries.

I know nothing of the resources of Alaska with regard to grains, they have never been experimented with, but you may be surprised to hear that the "blue grass of Kentucky" grows wild as high as your head, and that "red top" is luxuriant. At Holy Cross I saw a large hay field which Father Ragaru said raised more hay than they could possibly use for their cattle. There's a good joke about this mission's cattle. Ask the father what it is.



There are very few horses in the country, but there was not hay enough for them last year; although it readily brought \$125 a ton, and in many parts of the country, notably along the Stewart River, N. W. T., it could be had for the cutting during the summer. At Dawson, though flour was \$1.10 a pound, horses were fed it, barley and split peas. Fritz Kloke, one of the successful miners in Bonanza, was the first I know to take up land for such purposes. He paid \$1.25 an acre for meadowland along a slough.

Ordinary stock would scarcely pay in Alaska, owing to the difficulty of keeping it during the long winter and from the pestiferous mosquitos in summer. But a large pastoral population could be supported by herds of reindeer. As has been said, the country is covered with their natural food; and 10,000,000 head might range the mountains. Fresh milk could then be had, milk thrice richer than a Jersey's, and it could be canned in large quantities for export. Cheese of a superior kind could also be manufactured. Fresh meat would be plenty and body products could be shipped.

So much has been said of Alaska's gold that the importance of her immense fisheries has been almost lost sight of. From 1884 to 1890 the income from salmon alone was \$7,500,000, \$300,000 more than the entire country cost. For many years the whales of the Arctic have furnished most of the sperm oil and whale bone of commerce; the cod of Alaska's coast is equal to Newfoundland's; her rivers run as red with salmon as did Egypt's with blood the day Moses cursed the water; and a pioneer who had made fishing a business there told me, others corroborating what sounded like a double fish story, that he had caught a ton of grayling a day. All this would provide a permanent population with means of support, fishing, salting, canning



and exporting. The liver of the loche, a sort of cod in the Yukon, furnishes a *pâte-de-foie-gras* so rich that a teaspoonful is enough. The liver is large and consists almost wholly of oil.

/ Lumbering will be another industry of the near future. Alaska, for hundreds of miles at a stretch, is heavily wooded. The supply is almost inexhaustible. Fir, spruce, larch, pine, birch, alder, poplar, cottonwood, quaking aspen, willow, and a fragrant light yellow cedar that is excellent for shipbuilding, and very durable, grow closely. / Near the boundary line of British Columbia, in the region about Juneau, prospecting has been greatly retarded by the dense forest growth, through which most experienced woodsmen can make but three or four miles a day. Stretching along the Yukon in many parts, the trees stand so close that there is hardly room for the luxuriant growth of bushes and berries that make the scene almost tropical in its bright green. None of these trees are large. I did not measure them but should judge they average ten or twelve inches in diameter. Last summer the little sawmill at Dawson, which is the first taken into the country, and formerly stood at Forty-Mile, was running twenty hours a day, employing two shifts of men, and the owners would have been glad to have run it twenty-four hours if they could have obtained enough logs. But men who are chasing rainbows for pots of gold, cannot spend their time in anything so prosaic as logging. As it was, the sawmill netted nearly \$1,000 a day. At that rate, sawdust is gold dust. When I was there the company was paying \$50 a thousand for logs, and a tax of \$3 a thousand to the Dominion, and was receiving \$150 a thousand for sawed lumber and as much for slabs. Loggers float their rafts down the creeks. Where the Klondike



empties into the Yukon there is a curious current, half the water flowing up stream, the other half down, and the clear color of the Klondike not mingling with the muddy greater stream. It is difficult to get rafts past this place and into Dawson, two miles further down. In the interior, reindeer would be invaluable for hauling logs. Back in the mines sawed lumber has been sold as high as \$1,000 a thousand, and is often \$750. Of course these enormous prices will lower with the advent of sawmills. Last year, 1897, there were but three in the whole country, Harper & Ladue's at Dawson, N. W. T., one at Sixty-Mile, and one owned by the mission and leased to the traders at Anvik, Alaska.

The Yukon freezes first near the mouth, in the delta, where there is little current, and the river as far as the Tanana is comparatively smooth. Above that the gorges narrow the channel and the water rushes down and in high ridges, often inclined, forming the worst of anchor ice. This is why travel by sled, ice boat or skating is impossible along much of this great artery in winter. When spring comes, these sharp masses of ice break up with the force of a log jam, undermining the banks and felling trees as neatly as if they were cut by a giant sickle. The Indians catch these drifting logs and cut into cordwood for the use of the river steamers, which pay \$4 a cord down the river and \$5 near Dawson, where it is hard to find at that price, and the boats are sometimes detained while the crew go ashore to cut wood, as everyone in that region is mining. The boats use from twenty to twenty-five cords a day. Cordwood is needed, too, at the mines for burning and drifting, in large quantities. There it commands from \$15 to \$60 a cord. Of course all of these prices will lower when the rush of men next year will provide workmen in plenty.



A TYPICAL MINER'S CABIN IN THE KLONDIKE COUNTRY.









When I was in Dawson, every log that went into a cabin cost ten dollars, not counting the labor, and was a small log at that. Carpenters were in demand at twenty dollars a day. Men could not stop to clear the ground upon which their shack was to stand, and likely did not know how to build it. The price of a small log cabin, one room, 10x12 perhaps, was \$500 in gold. An Englishman I knew there, while waiting with four men, built his cabin in a few days. The sole outlay was \$10 for nails. He sold it before it was finished. After my return, a man called to get some "pointers." I learned he had been brought up in the forests of Canada, and was a practical lumberman. I told him about this, and he said he should change all his plans; no uncertain prospecting for him, when he could surely strike a bonanza with his ax. So instead of pick and gold pan, he took his kit of tools. He says he is an expert worker and feels certain he could fell the trees and build such a cabin alone in a week, or ten days at most, and \$500 a shack would permit him to buy into mines like a capitalist.

The fur trade of Alaska is not what it was, but is still not to be despised. Almost all fur-bearing animals peculiar to northern countries, are to be found there. But as this has little to do with permanent settlement, more of it anon.

/ I have seen Alaska without a railroad, wagon road, regular mail, cable or telegraph; without a single town, or jail, or soldier; without a factory, a farm, or a dairy; practically without a government, and with a handful of men roaming its vast solitudes. I am convinced that before I die, if my days are as many as my father's, I might return to find Alaska rich, prosperous, populous, with the smoke of its canneries ascending straight to its clear blue sky, with ships from



many countries touching at its ports; dotted by farms, and with towns here and there. States will be formed from it in time to come, and children will preserve as curiosities the geographies their mothers studied showing that magnificent portion extending from North America, and will laugh at the expression "exclusive of Alaska" applied to that wonderful, no longer strange country. I believe time will prove the truth of my prophecy, though I am by no means alone in making it. Captain Ray, for instance, is enthusiastic as to its future.



## CHAPTER XVII

### WHAT SHALL I PUT INTO MY PACK?

It's a shame that when a man has little money but much courage, he cannot obtain reliable information about how to prepare for his projected trip to the Land of Promise. Especially in the matter of outfits, every one seems to have an ax to grind. As I wield none, not even a tiny hatchet, I have been often asked if I will not incorporate something upon the subject in this volume.

"Grub" is the first consideration in Alaska. Of course, this can be purchased much cheaper in the States, but the freight makes it costly. If you do outfit before sailing, Tacoma is undoubtedly the cheapest and best place on the coast. A little farther up the bay than Seattle, and therefore struggling with Seattle for supremacy, the Tacoma merchants seem determined by lower prices and every accommodation to obtain this greatly desired trade.

When I was last up the Yukon, the miners were ordering their year's supplies. They always order enough for an entire year, as grub cannot be bought again before the boats come up in the spring, but a surplus can always be sold. Several old miners gave me copies of what they were buying, and comparing one with another I have struck this dependable average outfit. It's variety has been carefully studied by the miners as the best prevention against scurvy, the curse of canned countries. The prices are those which were ruling in Dawson at that time, when the boats were in and supplies were on hand. Of course, these



prices were many times multiplied later, even if the goods could be obtained. This outfit weighs about 1,800 pounds:

- 10 sacks flour, @ \$6.
- 3 lbs. baking powder, @ \$1
- 20 lbs. buckwheat, @ 25 cts.
- 1 lb. saleratus, \$1.
- 1 case soda crackers, \$15.
- 60 lbs. canned butter, \$35.
- 100 lbs. white sugar, \$30.
- 50 lbs. brown sugar, \$12.
- 80 lbs. beans, @ 15 cts.
- 50 lbs. each of rice, peas and rolled oats, @ 25 cts.
- 25 lbs. pearl barley, @ 25 cts.
- 30 lbs. cornmeal, @ 25 cts.
- 100 lbs. bacon, @ 50 cts.
- 30 lbs. cheese, \$20.
- 20 lbs. coffee, \$10.
- 7 lbs. tea, \$10.
- 40 lbs. lard, @ 50 cts.
- 1 case condensed milk, \$24.
- 1 case each canned tomatoes, corn and evaporated potatoes, each \$12.
- 5 cans cabbage, \$12.
- 1 box prunes, \$7.50.
- 10 lbs. dried onions, \$10.
- 100 lbs. evaporated fruit, \$40.
- 10 lbs. raisins.
- 1 case canned fruit, \$18.
- 1 case each canned roast beef, roast mutton, and corned beef or sausage, \$18 each.
- 1 case ½-lb. cans oysters, \$18.
- 1 case pickles, \$10.
- 1 case honey, \$24.
- 1 gallon vinegar, \$10.
- 1 can mustard, \$1.
- 1 lb. pepper, \$2.
- 2 doz. small bottles horseradish, \$8.
- 10 lbs. salt, \$1.

Flour, as the papers have informed us, has sold up to \$1.50 a pound during the winter. I have put down



more baking powder and saleratus than a woman would need with the amount of flour, but men always use more. All of the outfits mentioned five pounds. There are quite a number of soda springs near Forty-Mile, and mineral springs of many varieties are found all over Alaska. Soda-water seldom freezes. Biscuits mixed with it are said to taste "like those your mother used to make," and the water is healthful, which is more than can be said of some that looks clear but is poisoned by peat. Soda crackers don't freeze. The canned butter in Alaska is invariably good; I never tasted better—and I never tasted *worse* beans. Cooking beans is an art. I'd advise taking canned pork and beans, which need only heating. It's really half laughable, half pathetic to see miners in Alaska, especially newcomers, trying to cook, and yearning for the flesh-pots of Egypt. One young college man, who in the States was more noted for his football playing than for his cooking, told me that he had found that corn meal fried a good deal better if it was boiled first! I tell you, there's going to be an army of contented men back in the States in two or three years who will eat anything put before them, even to crow, with an appetite, an absence of grumbling, and a sense of deep gratitude which will be touching to behold. No need of killing the fatted calf for them; "Any old thing will do for me, and thank you." And when these men realize that they don't have to cook themselves over the fire, nor wash the pots afterward, their wives won't know them. Speaking of this and the bacon—a hundred pounds seems a good deal, but you see the body needs considerable fuel in cold weather—reminds me of Fritz Kloke, an old miner who has spent ten years in Alaska and has undergone much hardship and deprivation, especially before the companies carried



up such a great variety of canned goods. At one time, in nearly four years he had only thirty-two pounds of sugar. He averaged but three or four cans of milk a year. He would fry his bacon first, and mix the grease with flour, thinning it with water, and then fry the batter. Fritz remarked to me in passing that "it had a very small taste like omelette." I can readily believe it was a "*very* small taste." For Japan and Rio, he and his two associates drank steeped juniper or rose-leaves. Spruce boughs make "quite nice" tea, he says, and I will take his word for it. A man came along one day and gave them a cup of tea to divide among the three, and they "felt it a big present too." That was the year Fritz had the scurvy, and subsequently lost all his teeth.

Miners nowadays need not suffer for food if they have money, for everything that will keep is taken in. Mr. McQuesten—though nobody in Alaska would know him if he's called anything but Jack McQuesten—has been in Alaska twenty-four years. One year a couple of miners went to him and asked if he wouldn't send out and order some rolled oats. "Oh, yes." And some dried onions. "Yes." So they took turns mentioning things they'd like, and McQuesten agreed to everything. In the Spring, they went to McQuesten's trading post for their outfit.

"But where are—" ?

"And are—" ?

"And are—" ?

"Why, gentlemen," broke in Jack, "I thought you were joshing. I didn't order them, never heard of such things."

Now, of course, things are very different, and cooking, except bread, is a simple matter.

There are now many preparations of food especially



designed for long marches. You remember there were several exhibits of them at the World's Fair. The only trouble with them is that they are expensive, and only obtainable in large cities. Still, you would probably more than cover the difference in freight and convenience. Three-quarters of an ounce of saccharine equals twenty-five pounds of sugar. A relative writes me that his sugar costs him seventy cents a pound, "delivered." Soup squares need only to be dissolved in water. Irish stew is dried so that the addition of water makes a savory dish. Extract of beef can be bought in Alaska, and hot soup is very grateful after a long tramp. The Northwest Mounted Police carry tea tablets and many such things. Concentrated lime tablets are invaluable. One makes a glass of lemonade and prevents scurvy.

But to resume the outfit:

10 doz. candles, \$10.  
 Matches, \$3.  
 10 gals. kerosene, \$15.  
 20 lbs. tobacco, \$30.

If you have kept track of things throughout the winter, you will know that candles have been scarce at a dollar apiece, and kerosene almost unobtainable. When one remembers the long Arctic night, the loneliness, the lack of pleasure and comforts, and darkness with it all, some idea of the cost of gold may be obtained. I adjoined the tobacco, for I didn't see a man in Alaska who didn't smoke. They say it's company. Bad cigars being fifty cents apiece, it's cheaper to smoke a pipe.

As for cleanliness:

12 bars laundry soap @ 20 cts.  
 12 bars toilet soap, @ 50 cts,



A man is his own laundress. One miner told me frankly that he usually wore his clothes till he could stand them no longer, when he tied them to a pole and hung them in a creek, and the current did the rest.

As to clothes, leave your dress suit folded away in lavender at home. You'll have no more use for it than for "dem golden slippers." Instead, for the winter festivities, you will require, also at low-water mark Dawson prices:

- 3 suits of heavy underwear, @ \$7.
- 3 woolen overshirts, @ \$3.50.
- 1 suit of Mackinaw (blanket such as lumbermen wear), \$10.
- 1 doz. woolen socks, @ 75 cts.
- 2 pairs German socks, @ \$2.50.
- 2 pairs arctics, @ \$4.
- 4 pairs moccasins, @ \$2.
- 3 pairs buckskin mittens, @ \$5.
- A fur cap, \$6.
- A fur parka, \$25.

A very heavy pair of blankets, or better, a wolf or lynx robe, 6x7, for \$100. I was told of a Canadian mill that has orders months ahead for blankets something like a quarter-inch thick. That shows how little people think what it means to "pack" in Alaska.

Sleeping bags, much as you hear of them in the States, are not used by miners. "It's the sure sign of a tenderfoot," remarked one. Most of them have blankets. One miner told me when he was a boy he used to puzzle over how a man could "take up his bed and walk," but as his now weighed but six and a quarter pounds it was clear. Furs are very expensive in Alaska, despite the fact that they are plentiful. Miners have no time to hunt them, and Indians find they receive about what they demand. It's astonishing



what such things cost in Alaska. I met a man who went in last spring, taking an old black sleigh robe that cost \$14 six years before, and showed it. When he came out, a miner eagerly asked him if he'd take three ounces (\$51) for it, which he gladly did. In fact, he sold about everything he took, returning with nothing but the clothes he had on and one change of underwear. Most people have too few socks. With the hard wear, they soon give out.

You notice the ridiculous price of buckskin mittens. The whole moose skin used to cost but \$1.50; last winter the Indians got \$15. The cap is of the commonest fur, usually muskrat. A parka is a shirt-like short coat, which pulls over the head. It has a hood with a fringe of fox or lynx which can be made to almost cover the face. These parkas are made of any close fur, the cheaper ones of rabbit skin or muskrat. The costly ones are of Siberian reindeer. Men, women and children, among the natives, wear parkas. Speaking of them reminds me of such a funny thing which I do not in the least intend to be irreverent. I was saying something about parkas when a miner burst into laughter and apologized by saying that he suddenly thought of a Christmas service he had attended at one of the Catholic missions. His companion, a rough fellow, had never attended mass before, and was greatly interested. The priest announced that for the space of ten minutes Christ would be upon the altar, whereupon this miner leaned over and said with conviction, "Look sharp, Jim, it's the nearest you'll ever come to seeing Him," and then added wonderingly and not intending to be funny, as the priest donned one after another of the sacred robes, "How *many* parkas is he going to put on!"

For summer you'll require:



2 or 3 suits of light underwear, @ \$5.

3 gingham overshirts, @ \$2.

A hat, \$5.

3 pairs of overalls, @ \$2.50.

1 pair mukluks, \$5.

1 pair hob-nailed shoes, \$6.

A five-dollar hat suggests a derby Dunlap; needless to say, that is not the brand. A young New Yorker came out with us. He was an aristocratic-looking boy, with good clothes, and as he had been in but a few months, I wondered idly where he got that hat. It had originally been white, was large, soft, soiled, and didn't fit. He said a man came up to him just before he left Dawson and offered him five dollars and that hat for his half-worn black one. "So I traded, knowing I could buy another at Seattle."

"How do you spell muk-luks?" I asked, when I first heard the word. "Oh," was the answer, "Alaska's a paradise for bad spellers. All the names are Indian, Eskimo, Russian, or slang, and as we have no dictionaries as authority for any one of them every fellow spells to taste—mostly goes by sound." Mukluks are skin boots, watertight and very strong, made from sealskin by the natives. The hair is removed. Thongs bind them about the ankles. A pair of rubber boots reaching the hips is a great convenience in fording.

As to mining tools, you will wear out every year at least:

2 picks, @ \$6.

2 shovels, @ \$2.50.

1 ax, \$3.

1 gold pan, \$2.50.

Besides this, if you are handy with tools, and you ought to be to succeed in a primeval country, you should have a hammer, whipsaw, two augers, and a



chisel, at least, and, of course, the Great American Jackknife. Outfitters advertise "snow - glasses." Metal-rimmed ones, except gold, would freeze to your nose. Buy none outside, but get some wooden ones, light and effective, from the Indians. It is really wonderful the skill primitive nations show in such things. If the Indians understood all the principles of optics, they could not excel these snow-glasses. I have shown them to several scientific men, who all wondered at their perfection. I gave a pair to Dr. Carl Lumholz, the noted explorer, as he was so much interested in them. In this connection, don't go to Alaska without a reliable compass. In the winter there is little sun, and in the summer that luminary is so erratic in its movements around the circle that it must require long practice to argue directions from it.

No miner cares to make an itinerant drug store of himself, though outfitters seem to think so. If you are a homeopathist, go to your family physician, and he will fit you a little case of ordinary remedies such as a lady I saw has. Folded in the top of the box was a typewritten sheet of directions.

No one with the slightest weakness of the lungs should go to Alaska. Although a really healthful climate, the seeds of consumption mature with great rapidity. The reason many insurance companies will not accept "risks" among those about to leave for Alaska is not the unhealthfulness of the climate, but because it would be all but impossible to legally prove death there, and frauds would be frequent.

Speaking of insurance crimes reminds me of that Iowa murderer, Frank Novak, who tried to burn his victim so that he might benefit by his own supposed death. He was the first convict ever taken out of interior Alaska, and he went down the Yukon on the



boat I traveled upon. His room was opposite mine, and as he sat with the detective to whose credit his capture was due, Mr. Perrin of Chicago, I could see him reading. He was a slight, gentlemanly-looking man, with a refined face, a pleasant face, except for the cold and cruel blue eyes. He had the finest hair I ever saw on a criminal. Dear little Serene seemed to wonder why he, the only exception, did not speak to her. One day she ran over and looked at him curiously, and then discovered the shackles on his ankles. Her sweet little voice said, "Dood morning." He hung his head and did not answer. "Teems to me, 'ou id naughty. What dot on 'ou feet?" Then turning to me she added, "Man dotn't 'ove me, Mom-y." Novak really seemed to wince under the baby criticism. Perhaps he remembered his little children so far away to whom he was returning in irons, bringing disgrace and shame.

But to return: Rheumatism, neuralgia, and toothache are common in Alaska. Everyone intending to go there should have his dentist do his worst before leaving. The only one in Dawson is doing a land-office business at five dollars for a silver filling you could get here for fifty cents, and gold in proportion. Take liniment. An excellent one is equal parts of sweet oil, laudanum and ether. Take toothache drops. There wasn't a toothbrush for sale in Alaska last year—take half a dozen and tooth powder. Teeth decay rapidly in that climate, without scurvy to assist.

In Chicago, quinine costs fifty cents an ounce; in Dawson, they balance it with gold dust, ounce for ounce—and gold dust there is worth \$17 an ounce. I have heard of salt's being weighed in the same fashion back in the mountains. How Eskimo would wonder at that; they detest salt. They will spit out choice



corned beef when they would eat rotten fish with infinite relish.

A very small vial of arnica costs two dollars in Dawson, and it is invaluable in a camp. Don't forget absorbent cotton, a roll of bandages, witch hazel, and vaseline. Accidents often happen in mining, and in climbing the icy mountains. Be certain to carry a good supply of clean rags. Mine were soon exhausted when people knew I had some. You see, carbuncles are all the rage in Alaska; they are worn by everybody. This is owing to the lack of fresh vegetables and fruit, and the difficulty of varying food much. Poor Father René made the long trip down the river beset with a double carbuncle. Take some good ointment. Your wife or mother will know the only infallible kind. I was told a few spoonfuls of condensed milk, hot with pepper, is good for bowel complaint. Take blackberry brandy, court plaster, belladonna plasters, and insect powder. Salts are one dollar a pound there. An accurate fever thermometer would be a valuable thing, too. A druggist told me the basis of all the best cough medicines is spruce-gum, which is to be found everywhere in Alaska. Dissolve one ounce of it in a pint of Jamaica rum, if obtainable pure, otherwise in a pint of alcohol. Dose, a teaspoonful.

Take silver money; it's at a premium there, for Indians will work or sell for much less if paid in coin, and there's absolutely no money in the country. Nor until lately was there any use for money, the Indians didn't know it had any value, and would only trade. Likewise, take pencils and paper. At Minook, a man came aboard who told me the miners had begged his pencil and all the blank pages of his notebook. They didn't have enough paper in camp to record another claim. His receipt was written upon a dirty scrap a



few inches square. Take powdered ink. It will not freeze, and you can add water as you need it.

I have said nothing of cooking utensils, etc. Then there are the tent, the Yukon cookstove, sheet-iron, fold-up, price \$15; ropes, a coffee-mill, etc. These things are usually bought on shares with your partner.

You want a rifle and a hunting knife, for, although the mosquitoes drive the game back into the mountains in the summer, in winter one may obtain fresh meat by going off a distance. Large game is plentiful on Stewart and Indian rivers. Caribou seems especially plentiful about every three years. "The year the *Arctic* sunk"—the monotonous years are told off so in Alaska—game was sold for five cents a pound, one miner said. That was in '89. Guns sell readily, as men haven't encumbered themselves with them. A man aboard ship sold his 30-30 Winchester for \$75, and found he could have got more.

Don't, I beseech of you, make yourself ridiculous with a cartridge belt stuck with revolvers and bowie knives. Bold, bad men "don't go" in Alaska. This reminds me of such a good story Frank Densmore told me; that it was upon himself in no wise detracted from his enjoyment of it. He is one of the pioneers of Alaska, and first left his Boston home for the West when only sixteen. "I had a youngster's notion of being piratical, and ba-ad. I was tall and very strong, and on the way got into a fight with a man and whipped him. Well, when we reached Denver I bought a buckskin suit, two revolvers, belt, and—you know that border ruffian outfit. I was swaggering along, doubtless cutting a ridiculous figure, when I met this man. He had a cowboy's whip. He gave me a thrashing which did me good and has lasted me ever since. Bruised, smarting, and all but crying, he left me,



while the bystanders jeered, 'Eh, kid, what you doing with those guns?' 'Turn your belt around, boy,' etc. Well," added Densmore, "I walked straight off and sold those revolvers, and I've never owned one since."

I think I've mentioned all your necessary outfit, but unless you're as strong as a burro you'd better let somebody else be pack-horse for you to the mines. A miner I met paid \$160 for packing goods that cost him \$480. Of course, the price is governed by circumstances, but the usual charge is ten cents a pound in winter, and forty cents in summer, owing to the dreadful mire of the trails, the mosquitoes and gnats, and packing everything on the back, while in winter freight is taken by dog-sled.

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I have mentioned no extravagancies, no "tender-feet" unnecessaries. A number of miners to whom I have shown this approve of what I have written, in fact, they gave me the data. One can readily see that even placer mining, the "poor man's," requires considerable capital. Everything in this long list, too, must be purchased every year. Take notice, too, that one cannot even work for wages there if he has not an outfit; he is not hired by anyone if he has not. His employer may be a millionaire, but he has only enough for himself to eat. No man is allowed to go into a store in Alaska and buy all he likes, but only his fair share for himself, and that is often denied him. "I want ten sacks of flour"—"Can't have but one," and so on. If people only understood these conditions, there would not be such armies starting for Alaska, most of whom will return, if they ever return, penniless, physically broken by hardship, discouraged to the heart's core, and with no energy to strive to make the connections



they have broken. Their families will be impoverished, suicide will be frequent. There has never before been such a universally unconsidered movement.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### A MINE IS MINE !

It must be a happy day when a man, new to the exciting experience, writes that sentence to the dear stay-at-homes. What is the very first step in obtaining one? so many anxiously enquire, that I have decided to devote a chapter to them. Of course, those who go, soon find it out, but they wish to know before they start, or ought to, and so do the home people, and miners have little time for letter writing.

Of course, you know everything in all the Klondike region has been gone for months. There's no more use for you to dream of its gold than to hope for the piles of gold in a bank. They are selling sixteenths of claims at big prices. The smallest portion sold so far was fifteen feet on El Dorado.

To locate a mine, one must either hang around a mining town, like Dawson, waiting to join "a rush" to a creek where prospects have been found, or go out into the solitary mountains and begin digging on some creek which looks promising. Supposing you were told that if you should sink a hole somewhere in your city or county you *might* strike gold. Where would you begin? Then think what it is to face the whole wide country of Alaska to strike your pick! Still, there's "color" everywhere, though not always in paying quantities, and there's no reason why highly rich mines should not be struck in our own possessions, although probably not another Klondike. Such a region has never before been discovered, and will be apt to remain unique.



Prospecting is difficult, expensive, blind. It is done principally in winter, when one can haul his grub and save the heavy expense of packing. But a team is seven dogs, and they cost from \$100 apiece up. The sled costs about \$25, and you must carry, beside your own food, three fish a day for each of your dogs. Two usually prospect together. One runs ahead to guide the dogs, the other steers the sleigh behind; the outfit rides in state.

It takes from ten days to two weeks to sink a prospect hole, one working at the bottom, one on the dump. After all your labor you may find nothing, and this may happen for weeks, or a whole season. Many men have been in Alaska for years and never made more than enough to buy the next year's outfit, sometimes being obliged to borrow. Several of the miners I talked with have spent years at the hardest work, and some have even yet not "struck it rich." If a man is one of the kind who, if it rained soup, would be caught out with only a fork, he will miss gold in Alaska.

But 'sposing, as the children say, you "struck color" in your prospect, the discoverer would stake two claims, if he were on American soil, and would return for supplies and "give a tip" to some friend, who would pass it on to his, and so there would be a "rush" to the creek. And when a man realizes that a minute's hurry may make him a millionaire, or that much delay will lose his golden opportunity, he "stands not on the order of his going, but goes at once," often without carrying sufficient food, through marrow-piercing cold or beating rain, without shelter or rest, pressing forward to the verge of death from exhaustion. "Fritz" told me he had never recovered, never should, from such an experience when he staked his claim on



Bonanza. He slept, or rather did not sleep, all night on the bare ground, in a cold rain, and was hungry besides.

If miners were imaginative, what thoughts would crowd as a man drove his stake. Is it only more toil, privation, expenditure, or—the miner's expression is full of unconscious pathos—is he driving a home-stake?

A claim must be staked in person, by man or woman not under eighteen. No one but the discoverer may stake more than one claim on a creek, or, in Northwest Territory, in a whole district, but he may purchase as many, of course, as he pleases. Claims are usually five hundred feet along the creek, and from rim-rock to rim-rock. There is no time to measure, men are crowding upon you to snatch that dream-million from you; for mining is like gambling—no matter how often before you have missed fortune, this time it surely awaits you. Glacier Creek was entirely staked inside six hours, and one hundred men reached Victoria Creek in a day, though there are but twenty-two claims on it.

Mines are numbered from "Discovery" up and down. Long-legged men are in demand to pace them, for if you step off more than the allowed feet, you will simply lose the surplus when it is surveyed, but if you are short, so is your claim, and "for keeps," as the boys say. In this case, at least, the meek do not inherit the earth. From Discovery, claims are numbered down with the surplus at the lower end, and up, with the extra feet on the upper. When a man finds he has staked more than is allotted, he quietly informs a friend, who stakes the surplus; then the miner buys it, often. This accounts for one claim in Klondike which is but 30x30 feet, and another on El Dorado, 6x500 feet.



Stakes bear the name of owner and date of claim. In Klondike claims must be registered with the gold commissioner within three days if within ten miles of his office. There is \$15 registration fee, and the mine must be re-registered and fee paid every year. Men watch claims to the minute to "jump them," if the owner lets the time slip by unnoticed.

The mine is still not yours unless you "represent," that is, do so many consecutive days' work in it at a specified time of year, or employ it done. A working day in summer is ten hours, in winter seven or eight. In our possessions, all these details are settled by the miners themselves in majority ruling, and the registrar is one of themselves, who receives a fee of \$2.50 for recording each claim.

Now that the mine is obtained, how is it worked? "Prospect" holes, 6x8 feet, are sunk 50 feet apart to bed-rock. The top stratum is almost adamantine clay, usually several feet through. The hole is picked in this and a fire of cordwood built in it, which thaws it only about two inches in a night. In the morning, the man at the bottom digs out the thawed earth, and hoists it to the man on the dump. No gold is found in this clay. Gravel and pay dirt are next struck, and the nightly fire thaws out about a foot. The ground thrown on the dump freezes solid in half an hour, and is left there till it is sluiced when the water runs in the spring. Cordwood varies greatly in price, but is generally about \$15 a cord. I was told in Dawson it would probably sell for \$60 back in the mines in the winter. Each two men burn about thirty cords a winter, so here is another expense. The distance to bed-rock varies on different creeks, and even in different parts of the same. It averages fifteen to twenty feet below the surface. On Victoria Creek, Klondike,



it is actually but eighteen inches to bed-rock, and they can work both winter and summer.

No blasting is done in Alaska; the frozen ground will not crack. When the holes are all sunk, they are connected by tunnels. This method of mining is almost the only one employed there. It is called "burning and drifting." Fifteen men can easily work out a claim in a year. A lay means furnishing your own grub, and working without wages for, generally, half in the space assigned. A sale on bed-rock is an agreement to pay a certain amount of gold dust to be taken from the claim transferred.

Gold is "sluiced" when the creeks run. The sluice boxes look like little wooden drains, and are elevated so as to make a pitch. The lumber from which they are built costs from \$300 to \$750, and even \$1,000 a thousand back in the mines, for it must either be packed long distances from the sawmills, or else "whip-sawed" by two men. Decidedly, even placer mining costs money. Still, if a man has a good placer, it pays for itself as soon as it is prospected. It's like a man pulling himself over a fence by his bootstraps. Why, about three years ago, "Alex" McDonald went north without a dollar; now he has millions, not wrung from the poor, but from rich old Mother Earth, nor piled up by creating a "corner" to the ruin of many, but honestly dug out of a corner by the sweat of his brow. From No. 30 El Dorado, Mr. McDonald took \$94,000 out of a strip forty feet by two feet deep. As an old miner said, "A fellow has to mix gravel with the gold to sluice it."

When gold is required during the winter, it is "panned." The pay dirt is placed in a broad, shallow sheet-iron pan, which is then filled with water. The miner gives it a few energetic shakes, and the gold,



which is heavy, falls to the bottom. Snow has to be melted for this. If the dust is very fine, it is thrown into water with mercury, which combines with it, forming amalgam. Gold "dust" is about like wet corn meal, "coarse gold" is small flakes, "nuggets" are lumps of any size. "Flour gold" is not found there.

"Rocking" is the third method of obtaining the gold. A rocker is a box about two by three feet, having a top tray with a sheet-iron bottom pierced with holes. The lower part has an inclined shelf covered with blanket. The box is on rockers. The miner ladles in water with one hand, and rocks with the other. Nuggets fall through the holes first, the blanket catches the coarse gold, and mercury in the bottom combines with the finest. The blanket is frequently dropped into water containing mercury, which reminds me: Washing miners' flannel shirts is twice remunerative. The laundress in Dawson charges fifty cents apiece for cleansing the shirt, and probably gets that much more from the water. Rocking is slow work, yet on Victoria Creek nine men in eight days rocked out \$1,500.

If a man has retained any one of his five senses during the recent and growing craze, he can readily see he would be a fool to give up a position of almost any kind, if sure, to rush off to Alaska or Klondike, especially if he has had no experience in mining nor a rough life. I have seen men come puffing and shivering into the house after shoveling the snow off a short walk, and begin grumbling that "a boy must be hired to do such jobs," while, as soon as they recovered breath after this hard work, they used it to tell you plans for getting to Klondike in the spring. Alaska is no place for tender flowers like these. There is nothing for any man there to do but the hardest, roughest manual labor, such as the commonest day laborer does



in the States, without the comforts that even he may return to in the evening. No professional men are needed. There are already scores of successful physicians and lawyers there working right along with people they would never meet at home. It is the most democratic country on earth. If a doctor is needed, one of them is almost sure to be in camp. If not, the towns have physicians who are practicing.

As to women, my advice is, generally, don't. Still, I realize the futility of such advice, for man or woman who has the Klondike fever is usually beyond hope. Like the fallen horse, "His eyes is sot." So many women have come to see me, and I have received many letters that were really pathetic in their anxiety, from typewriters, and clerks, and boarding-house keepers, etc. I read it all between the lines, their colorless lives and monotonous work, for enough to barely support them, youth passing, and nothing for the future. They have read of that Land of Promise, they feel that they could bear any discomfort and hardship for a chance in life. It is hard to quash all such hopes, but it is better to hear the hard facts here than there, when every cent of their pitiful earnings is gone. Nothing but the hardest of work is obtainable there for women, such work as would tax the strength of the stoutest charwoman. Washing and baking are the principal things. In summer, the insects are almost unendurable, and in winter all the water must be obtained by melting snow. The miners' clothes are filthy, and there are no conveniences. Baking bread for a score or so of men hungry as wolves, one loaf at a time in a tiny stove, is no sinecure. I will tell you the experience of one little woman I met at Circle City. She came in with her husband over the pass, and in the Spring at that. She wore men's clothes



while climbing. They were two months getting in. She thought her troubles over when she reached the gulch, but when she saw the shack in which she was to live, too small even to contain her stove, she sat down and cried. Her husband became ill, they had not money enough to get out of the country, and although unused to hard work, she, womanlike, rose to the occasion. She had shed her tears, so that they no longer blinded her to what lay next. She took in washing for the "fancy ladies," as she gravely stated it. I think when "ladies" has reached that point, that salesladies and scrubladies, etc., will be content to return to the dignity of women. "The company brought in a washing machine for me, my husband could turn it sometimes, but I had to carry and lift all the water. I have ironed by the light of one candle often and often till one and two o'clock at night and gone to bed so tired that I could not sleep. It's such a nervous country for women, too; every woman in Alaska looks nervous. I charged seventy-five cents for a shirt waist, and from a dollar and a half to two dollars a dozen for towels, but miners' towels are something awful, and soap and wood are expensive. I paid fifty cents for a little package of starch that sells for eight at home."

"What did I do for recreation? Oh, cleaned the house and knit and mended for ourselves and the miners. I had no time to be lonely, and of course I couldn't associate with those others anyway. They were good pay, and they never acted badly around me, they knew I was respectable." Yes, indeed, the little brave woman bore

"The dignity of labor, the long pedigree of toil."

Not a dance-house creature of them all but respected the struggling wife in her heart. She had been wait-



ing at Circle City for the boat to go to Dawson, and about thirty miners who were also waiting begged her to get their meals, for the once populous town was then empty. So she entered an abandoned restaurant and cooked for them all. They carried the wood and water for her, and pounded the coffee with a hammer, as there were but two coffee mills in town. The meals consisted of ham, bacon, and sometimes fish, bread, coffee and canned goods. She had dishes for but eight, so they ate in four relays, and she had to wash the dishes after each for the next. Have you that pluck and endurance? Then you will make money there. A woman who can go up a creek, and cook and wash for the men, under manifold inconveniences and discouragements, can easily make twenty-five dollars a week, probably more, but she would have no help, for the miners would be at their picks. They are chivalrous in their treatment of a decent woman, though, and generous. If she satisfied them, and that would be easy, she might get good chances to invest her earnings.

In Dawson, if she had capital, a woman could run a boarding house at big profit, but everything costs so much to begin with, and the population is so shifting. Of dressmakers, there are already plenty. There is absolutely no need of clerks, typewritists, nor anything but manual workers so far. There are several men bakers, but one woman makes doughnuts and such things, and does, they say, well. If a woman has any taste for and knowledge of gardening, she might benefit by reading the chapter upon agricultural resources.

Of course, I am speaking only of those who go to make money; more are going now than before to make homes for their husbands who have been exiled for



their sakes. It will be small and poor and uncomfortable, but hear Ruskin voice both wife and husband:

"But so far as it is a sacred place, a temple of the hearth watched over by Household Gods, before whose faces none may come but those whom they can receive with love,—so far as it is this, and roof and fire are types only of a nobler shade and light,—shade as of the rock in a weary land, and light as of Pharos in the stormy sea; so far it vindicates the name, and fulfills the praise, of home.

"And wherever a true wife comes, this home is always round her. The stars only may be over her head; the glow-worm in the night-cold grass may be the only fire at her foot: but home is yet wherever she is, and for a noble woman it stretches far round her, better then ceiled with cedar, shedding its quiet light afar, for those who else were homeless."

Of the under side of woman's life, I hesitate to write, and yet somebody should speak plainly. Of the creatures who always flock about a mining camp, like buzzards about carrion, there is little to say. "Their steps take hold on hell," and the men who keep pace with them must be going the same way and at the same rate, it stands to reason. It is almost impossible to do anything for these degraded women, and if men who enjoy their society would only confine themselves to it, the world would be the cleaner for it. To be sure, there have hitherto been few good women in Alaska, but what would you think of a man who said, "I cannot have a dove, therefore I will be happy with a scorpion?" There are scores of the lowest grades of prostitutes in Dawson dance houses, who, if money could make them rich, poor things, would be rapidly growing wealthy. One of these women who have bartered home and honor, peace and purity, love and little ones for gold, is said to have received \$600 in one



day. The old, old question rings out, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

But it is not of these I would write; they have chosen their own way, they "go to their own place," and their companions among men will accompany them. But it is shameful the way these "heathen" women are treated by the "Christian men," who, many of them, have left wives and children in the States. It is so common in Alaska that no one thinks anything of it. "Jim's squaw" is a recognized feature of life there. "Why don't you get a sleeping dictionary?" inquired an old miner of a young man who was remarking that he wished he spoke the language. It makes white men's responsibility no lighter that the squaws prefer them to their own people. Indian women are fond of dress, and are naturally prepossessed in favor of being sure of something to eat. Their airs and graces among their people, poor things, as they parade their gowns and hats and sometimes even clump awkwardly around in heavy shoes in which their unaccustomed feet must ache sadly, are very like a child's. They are usually treated kindly at any rate, but some of them have brutes for keepers. One of these despicable men brought his squaw aboard our boat. She was a clean, decent-looking girl, and had been to a mission school, but he paid no attention to her, and when she left the boat with her baby, he did not even bid her good-bye, though she watched him quite pathetically for even a look. I had told her something about the care of her baby, and she said diffidently that she was going to leave at the next stop, "but," she added quickly, as if to reassure herself, "my husband is coming back for me."

Did you know that slavery exists in the United



States? Alaskan girls are often sold by their parents. The only real love affair among the natives of which I learned, terminated in an elopement at Nulato, as the father refused to give his daughter to one of her own people because he wished to sell her for \$100 to a "civilized" man; I do not quote him. A few men at least act a father's part to their children. One well-known trader has sent his large family of children, as they grew older, to the States for education, but another, equally as well known, allows his to grow up like the natives around him. Many a man who has "struck it rich" in the mines of Klondike is coming out either to an unsuspecting wife or to wed some innocent girl. One of these went out on our ship. He left his squaw at Dutch Harbor to take another boat to Sitka to her own people. He said he was going to return to her, and perhaps he was. One thing to his credit was that she had a stateroom and he had her sit beside him at the men's table, the only Indian who was so allowed. He was a man of perhaps thirty-five, she must have been ten years older. He was rather good looking; she was, it goes without saying, homely, besides being lame and stupid looking. She had lived for several years with a white man who died, and she said his children had offered her a home back in the States. She was said to have \$3,000 or more in nuggets. "How can he so demean himself?" a woman remarked to me. "He does not demean himself," I replied, "for when such a connection is possible to a man, he is on the same level with the woman, be she what she may." Does such a man never regret the "true wife?"



## CHAPTER XIX

### FT. YUKON—THE FLATS—CIRCLE CITY

I was sitting alone upon the deck, not thinking, not even dreaming, only idly gazing upon the swift flowing Yukon, the only busy thing in sight. It was a drowsy afternoon. The monotonous heartbeat of the engine, puffing with its exertions against the strong current, was the only sound. It was pleasant to think that the steamer was doing all that was necessary, and that even if you felt disposed to labor, there seemed to be nothing in the world left to do. It is this that makes a voyage up the Yukon such a perfect rest. There is not a morning paper to be had, were all Klondike to be offered for it—Alaska is one country where gold is impotent. There is no mail to be read, no telegram can be received nor sent. Wall Street is as unreal as the streets of the New Jerusalem; the only "ticker" is the clock, and that is slow. At first you do not realize all this, then it worries you; but sooner than you could have imagined possible, you no longer expect what a lifetime has accustomed you to. I, who ran for elevated trains in Chicago, knowing full well that others were close upon their track, soon resigned myself. Time, space and gold are "long" in Alaska; home, content, and luxury, "short."

But, as I say, you soon become accustomed to isolation. The affairs of nations become trivial; you realize, perhaps for the first time, that, if pushed to it, the country can adjust its politics in your absence; your stay-at-home private business appears strangely inconsequential, and even your immediate family grow



indistinct before your mind's eye. It is as if death were near. Then nothing earthly is of importance, and we wonder how such slight things bound us.

As I sat like the old lady in church, "jist resting and thinking of nawthing," some one called to me that we were about to cross the Arctic Circle "there, where the Porcupine River empties into the Yukon," 1344 miles from St. Michael. This is the Land of the Midnight Sun. In summer it simply swings around the Circle. Less than ten miles further is Fort Yukon, which is said to be directly upon the Arctic Circle.

That morning there had been a strangely lonely funeral at the post. The trader's dogs had discovered a ghastly thing floating down the river. Bloated, blackened, gashed by obstacles from which the impotent hands could not protect, the horrid object in no wise resembled the man who had gone out, strong in body and will, to search for the yellow metal which has, since Time began, lured so many millions to their deaths. As the body bobbed up and down in the water in ghastly mockery of play, as it seemed, the dogs swam out and dragged it ashore, where it lay polluting the summer day. The trader spread a piece of tent cloth upon the beach, cut a sapling, and hooked the dreadful thing upon its shroud. Then he enclosed it in a box, and at one o'clock in the morning, the sun shining brightly over the lonely burial, the Anglican clergyman read the service for the unknown dead, and offered a prayer for those in a far country who, knowing not that they were bereaved slept on, while two awed strangers consigned their dear one to his nameless grave beside the Yukon. An old superstition says that when someone steps upon your grave-to-be, a shiver passes through you. Did no tremor come upon the unconscious dear ones thousands of miles away, when



the body of the wanderer sank exhausted into its bed? Did no vague premonition cause them to look away from one another and upward through the crowded air above us, which to dullards is entirely void? Think of the weary waiting, the long uncertainty, the prolonged sorrow! Nothing gave clew to identity. 'Twas but another of many such tragedies in the solemn solitudes of Alaska. The miner had gone forth upon his last prospect, he had reached the end of the rainbow. Did he find there treasures which neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, or did he enter that Undiscovered Country with hands as empty as he left this? How questions crowd around about that one eternal question—"If a man die shall he live again," a question unanswerable by the wisest of earth as by the simplest.

Old Fort Yukon, by the way, is one of the early settlements of the Hudson Bay Company. Here, in 1846, was born the first white child of interior Alaska. Her father was a factor of the company. She is now the wife of H. M. Robinson of the *New York Observer*. Here lives, too, little Louise Yukona Beaumont, the six-year-old daughter of the trader, who is the first white child born on the Yukon since then. When her mother bravely approached the great trial, there was no physician short of Forty Mile, and the nearest white neighbor was three hundred miles away. So the suffering woman had no other attention than that afforded by an ignorant squaw, drawn toward her by the freemasonry of the universal order of enduring motherhood, the bravest order that the world has ever known or will know.

Robert Kennicott, the naturalist, of whom I spoke in another place, spent the winter of 1860 and 1861, I think it was, at Fort Yukon. Near by the flats begin where millions of birds breed, and natural history



has been greatly enriched by his fowling at this place.

Mr. Kennicott's account of the earliest goose-hunt of the year is so interesting that I quote it from his report to the Academy of Science, Chicago:

"About the first of May the earlier migratory birds begin to arrive, and grand preparations were made for the goose-hunt, which is the great sport of the year at this post. The geese pass here in immense numbers. The *modus operandi* of the hunters is to make a low cabin, or blind of willows, or logs, on some island or point where the geese are known to pass, and close to a piece of open water. In this the hunter stands and when he sees a band of geese, imitates their call, when they will, generally, if not too high and he calls well, turn and come to him. As fast as any geese are killed, they are 'planted' near the stand, and when there are a number of these decoys and a good caller, the geese will actually come within twenty feet of the stand, where the hunter must be still till he thinks them close enough, when he rises and knocks them over. The laughing geese and the common large Canada goose are the most abundant here in spring. There are also a great many snow geese, and a miniature of the Canada goose. There are always seen a few flocks of a very small and rather bonnie black goose, with a white cravat on. We got a good many eggs, which I find very good eating if the embryos haven't got *feathers* yet."

Thrushes thrill the very air at Fort Yukon with their wild, sweet song. There are plenty of ptarmigan at Fort Yukon. This poor defenseless bird is a beautiful example of the wondrous courage that motherhood bestows. Ptarmigan are extremely timid birds, yet the female has been known to allow dogs literally to tear her to pieces rather than desert the eggs she strove to guard. Silly, feeble, heroic, feathered mother!

Above Fort Yukon the river broadens into many



channels and, like other people who spread out too thin, does not in consequence succeed admirably in its real business. The mountains have dwindled to dreary wastes of sand. The river was particularly low and if we had not had a captain who "could run a steamboat on a heavy dew" we should have shared the fate of other boats that, high and dry upon stretches of silt, were summering upon the Arctic Circle. This captain, John C. Barr, by the way, is a most unusual man, born in Glasgow of a fighting Scotch family who left him as heirloom a Claymore sword, a distinction among his countrymen. He came to the United States a small boy and was brought up in the South, yet he fought bravely throughout the Civil War in the Northern navy, probably the youngest officer in it. He was upon Admiral Porter's flagship and trained the men. The brave and handsome boy was a great favorite with the admiral, who gave him his photograph. When but twenty-one, Admiral Lee made him executive officer of his flagship *Tempest*. Barr, with two other naval officers, stood close to General Grant at the critical time when the fleet ran the batteries at Vicksburg. He refused to remain in the navy after the close of the war and has always ridiculed "Fourth of July" soldiers unmercifully. Watching a parade once, when the pompous peace-general was riding a curvetting horse that insisted upon traveling on the bias, Captain Barr remarked laughingly, "That man thinks himself Napoleon and all his marshals." Barr became pilot, then captain, upon the upper Missouri, when that river was the sole means of communication between the pioneers of the Northwest and the world. He has had many an exciting adventure and many a hair-breadth escape from the savage Indians which were the Ishmaels of our country. Father de Smet, in the world,



cousin of the king of Belgium, heir to a throne and a fortune; in the church, missionary to the Indians for forty years, a Jesuit, was a friend of Captain Barr, and gave him what is probably the only picture of himself taken after entering his long and heroic service. He called Barr "son," though of a Scotch Presbyterian race. The memory of Father de Smet is apt to set the captain talking, for other men's heroisms excite his admiration. Barr has traveled widely, known many famous people, read deeply and extensively. He is an inventor and understands intricate machinery of all kinds. There is nothing about a boat and its engine that he cannot build as well as operate. He possesses a range of information which surprises specialists on their own lines. He is one of the fortunates who are popular with both men and women, and not the least of his charm is his modesty. He must be sought and drawn out. He will accomplish the work of half a dozen men and demand credit for none. He devotes his leisure in the long Arctic night to studying Latin and reading Bacon's Essays, Plutarch's Lives, and the like. Captain Barr's influence over the men is most unusual, for his discipline embraces himself. "When I drink and carouse and idle, you may, every man of you," is his rule. Not a squaw is allowed near their winter quarters, the men attend to their business and save their money. "John C. Barr is the most perfect man I have ever known," was the deliberate statement of a man of wide affairs, accustomed to judging men. Another said, "Barr's a fool, he's so absurdly honest—but we all like him for it."

For seven nights during our trip Captain Barr did not touch a bed, only caught cat naps on "easy bits of river," instructing the pilots to waken him at such a point, for he did not propose to have another boat on a sandbar when



there was danger of scarcity of food up the river. He would not even stop the boat at Minook for half a day that the passengers might rush out and stake mines—would not even touch for fear of losing his crew. He is the only man on the Yukon that the Indian pilots look up to. When he first ascended the whimsical river he took matters—the wheel rather—into his own hands, reading the water as a printed page of instructions and the Indians dubbed him “the great captain.” He has a faculty in dealing with these shift, child-like people and has never lacked for pilots or crew even when others could not obtain them. And the Indian pilots have become the servant-girl problem of the Yukon, demanding tremendous pay and increasing privileges even to “sitting at table all same like white man, and landing the boat all same like captain,” which one pilot insisted upon, together with \$250 for the trip. He didn’t get them.

Each Yukon boat carries several pilots, who are generally to be found, when not asleep, in the pilot house, all eagerly scanning the river and ready to spring to the wheel or to give their advice to the wheelsman. They smoke and visit in the friendliest way.

The whistle calling for sounding is frequently heard among the flats and I always liked to watch. A man sprang to each side of the bow with line or pole and called his sounding alternately to the man on watch upon the hurricane deck, who passed the information along to the captain. One of these men had the funniest intonation as, raising his right or left hand, each finger indicating a foot, he would solemnly and sadly announce, “T’ree fut six,” “One fad-om,” and occasionally, “No-o-o bottom,” the first word prolonged indefinitely, the second entirely slighted.

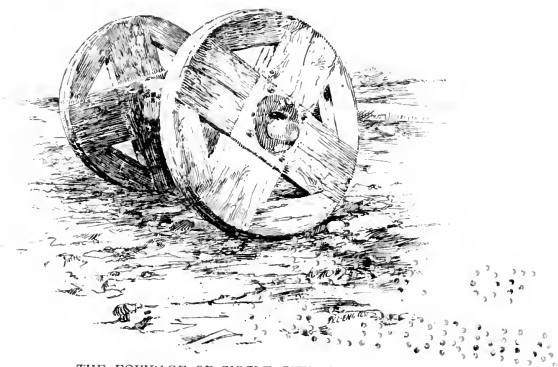
As one of the miners remarked, “There is absolutely



no scenery around Circle City." It is hard to imagine more forlorn surroundings than it has, 1394 miles from St. Michael. A short time ago it was the liveliest town in the world, now it is the deadest. Circle City was also the largest log cabin town known. Now its nearly seven hundred little habitations are as empty as last year's birds-nests, and at last accounts sheltered just seven people. Miners left this town by scores every day for the newly discovered Klondike, yet the Circle City district, until then, was considered marvelous. Gold on Eagle Creek, for instance, assayed \$18.68 an ounce, higher than any found in Klondike. Deadwood, in the Birch Creek district, fifty miles from Circle City, was especially rich. "Johnny" Howard took out \$20,000 in six weeks there, an average of eleven ounces a man a day. Miller is said to have obtained \$35,000 from a place 30x100 feet. Now they are quite unworked because men cannot be induced to mine them. For lack of "representation" many of these rich mines have by this time become legally abandoned, and may be re-staked.

Doubtless many others are as ignorant as was I about the reason for some gold being worth so much more an ounce than other. And yet I should have known it was because of the varying proportions of silver or copper with which the gold is combined. It is these, too, which give it the great diversity of color so noticeable in Alaska. The poorest gold found there is at Cook's Inlet, where it is very light in color and worth from \$13 upward. On Napoleon Creek, a short one in the Circle City district, gold is worth nearly \$19. The nuggets found on Napoleon are invariably shaped like pumpkin seeds, some of them perfect, all of them smooth. Bonanza nuggets are bubbly; those found on Homestake Creek, which runs into Bonanza, are entirely different in color and invariably flat and





THE EQUIPAGE OF CIRCLE CITY, ALASKA.







marked like ferns. I have two specimens that look artificial, so perfect are the fronds. Minook gold is a beautiful bright yellow, and about the most valuable on the Yukon; that from Miller creek, on the contrary, is dark brown, resembling rusty iron, and would be passed by by a "tenderfoot." Victoria gold is the color of gold leaf and the nuggets are so tiny and flat that they look as if beaten. A miner can tell almost any nugget's creek-home by its color and formation. A complete collection would be an interesting and valuable addition to a mineral cabinet. Mr. P. B. Weare of Chicago has a good beginning toward such a collection.

The two palatial houses of Circle City cost respectively \$20,000 and \$12,000; but are nothing but plain, square, two-story log-houses, unpainted inside, with the walls covered with white cotton cloth.

The Circle City theater is deserted of course, and its wooden benches as empty as a coquette's heart. It had supported a stock company whose motto was, "What man dare, I dare," from "Hamlet" and "Romeo and Juliet" to the broadest of farces only to be enjoyed by the sort of element present. The last New Year's night a performance had been given for the benefit of the miners' association. It lasted all night. It was called a minstrel performance, but all tastes seem to have been consulted. It is astonishing how many kinds of people go to make up a mining community. A professional tight-rope and trapeze actor was one of the troupe that night. A sham miners' court was another attraction.

Much fun was abroad on the streets, too. Every now and then this carriage would draw up before a door and, willy-nilly, the householder would go out for a drive. This equipage was not, it is perhaps needless



to state, built by Studebaker. It was hack, express wagon, town band wagon and hearse, but that New Year's night's drunken frolics deprived it of its box and the carryall had dropped into a state of innocuous desuetude, when I photographed it. The first man to die in Circle City—and he died by hand, was borne to his last narrow home in this cart, drawn by his fellow miners, of course, there having been no horses there.

Circle City had its dancing school, too, and the balls given were—well, they were not monotonous. They were often patronized by one of the storekeepers as floor manager. He is a small, slight, curly-headed little fellow with an opinion of himself in no wise commensurate with other people's. As one of the miners grumbled, "'Twasn't fair to turn us great, homely, standard-two-yard fellows in with a pretty little man like him, 'specially when we were dressed on the installment plan. You see a fellow'd come up and say, 'Goin' to the dance?' 'No? Well, lend me those pants'—trousers aren't worn on the Yukon. Then he'd go to another that hadn't worn out his home clothes and say, 'Here, you're not a dancer, cough up that coat.' P'raps he'd have to go 'way up country 'fore he'd strike some lightish shoes that 'd fit. When a man finally got himself together he'd feel quite traveled and cosmopolite."

At Circle City lives "Jack" McQuesten, one of the most widely known and most popular men in Alaska. Twenty-four years ago Mr. McQuesten came from Oregon, but wants no other home for the rest of his life than Alaska. He insists the climate is delightful and that he's homesick every time he takes a trip to the States. A picture was taken as he sat in the sun before his store, the just-erected United States mail box embracing the opportunity to be photo-





PIONEER "JACK" MC QUESTEN.



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INSTITUTE  
OF GREAT  
BRITAIN  
AND IRELAND  
VOLUME  
LXXV  
PART I  
1905



graphed in the background. Mr. McQuesten was a pioneer pioneer, and wears a handsome gold watch and charm presented him by the order. He has been a friend in need and deed to many a miner, and many a man would never have made his homestake but for the patient kindness of "Jack" McQuesten, as everybody in Alaska calls him.

Above Circle City the scenery again becomes glorious. As I was sitting watching the mountains, a tall, rather ungainly miner came to me and said naively, "It's so long since I've spoken to a lady, may I not talk with you a little while?" I was pleased by the frank address and the keen look and we had a delightful chat. He was full of ideas and longing for new books. He mentioned "Trilby." I told him "Trilby" was no more, nor the man who created her, and happened to say that I considered "Peter Ibbetson" much superior in many ways. He had never read the book, so I told him its motive. "Ah," he said, appreciatingly, "how I should like to 'dream true,' to dream back into my home and old life. Do you know, I was thinking yesterday that in time not far distant, a famous astronomer in Mars will perfect a great telescope. He will happen upon a friend some afternoon and will say, 'By the way, I've finished my lens, come up tonight and I'll show you some wonderful sights.' Well, that night they will turn the telescope our way and the astronomer will say: 'See that insignificant little planet up there? That's called *The Earth* because the silly inhabitants think their pea is the only sphere worth rolling. Now look; there are their continents and there is a country, frigid and burning and lonely and apart, called Alaska. Now in all other countries and states there are great insane asylums, but, though crowded, they are insufficient,



so there is a whole great country given over to the worst cases. Now and then, some poor, insane creature comes to his senses in those awful solitudes and, in wondering joy, escapes from the land and hastens back to his home; but most cases are incurable. They just suffer along, poor devils, forgetting their former life quite, or recalling it like a dream.'

" 'But why do they choose this desolate land?' inquires his friend.

" 'Now this is the strangest part of it! With my wonderful new telescope you can see some rugged gulches and holes here and there along old river beds. These poor creatures spend their time digging hard for lumps of a yellow metal they actually think valuable, more worth than home and love and comforts and variety!'

" 'How preposterous! No wonder you say most of them are incurables. But, poor things, poor imbecile sufferers.' And I agreed with them with all my heart. Since I heard them I feel my case is not entirely hopeless, because I could still understand their view."

I forgot to ask this miner's name. If I knew it, I should be pleased to send him this little book in memory of our pleasant chat that Summer day under the blue sky of faraway Alaska. Should he happen to see this, and will write to me care of my publishers, I will send it.

It made a deep impression upon me, this man's jesting but half-bitter parable. It is all well enough if the man drives his homestake at once and goes out with a million, but oh! these others—this great majority of Others—what receive they in recompense?



## CHAPTER XX

### BEYOND THE BOUNDARY LINE

Beyond Circle City, Charley River and Seventy Mile the scenery is glorious. Abruptly rise the mountains from the river and roll tumultuously to the very horizon. "Shure," said Pat, as he gazed upon them, "there's so much land in this country that they have to pile it."

Among the mountains the great Yukon winds restlessly. It reminded me of our life river fast-flowing, for often there appeared to be no egress. How many times do we seem to have come to the end of the way before a mountain of difficulty; yet if we steam right along, behold a sudden turn, an unexpected opening, and our river of life broadens out in new beauty.

Near the boundary line are a curious eddy and the Tag-tag rapids, well-named, too, for the busy water is here utterly frivolous, giggling, running hither and thither, playing tag in most unseemly fashion. Joining in the fun is a near-by mountain appropriately named *Ring-streaked-and-striped*. It resembles the balmoral skirt of a Titaness. It hangs from the top in huge folds and is very full at the bottom, where it is striped some distance up in regular bands of black and gray. The next cliff has two white lines extending several hundred feet parallel, like a railroad track. This sandcliff is honeycombed and filled with martin nests. Somewhere on this part of the river rises a mountain which bears a long white sword with cross-hilt, glittering under the Arctic sun. I tried my hand at naming something, so although you will probably never see this mountain's appellation upon any map,



it is Escalibar. The unique Kate Field once told me a story, which her bright manner made extremely funny, a story affording a glimpse into the domestic life of our ancestors the Adam-ses, first of the name. It seems they were taking a constitutional in their garden, Eve hanging languishingly upon her husband's arm—'twas during their honeymoon—and Adam having the manly air of know-it-all which seems to have been masculine from the first. They were amusing themselves with naming another lot of animals. "Now, Adam dear, what shall we name this horrid homely little hopping thing?" questioned Eve, simpering. "Why, love," replied Adam rather brusquely—he had not yet accustomed himself to the feminine habit of asking needless questions—"since it *is* a toad, why not *call* it a toad?"

When I was a child, I thought the boundaries of states and countries as plain as those upon the maps of the old Cornell geographies. I have seen but two that appeared natural. One is the point at which the corners of Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona touch. It is marked by a stone, so that it is possible to be there in four states at once. The other is the boundary line established by William Ogilvie, dominion land surveyor, between Alaska and Northwest Territory. For a long distance it runs up hill and down dale, cut through underbrush like a roadway, blazed, marked by cairns. From the river you may plainly see it, 1,560 miles from St. Michael, climbing the mountains to divide the disputed claims of the Forty-Mile district. There lives a queer character, Sam Patch. He is a rabid American, always flying the Stars and Stripes, which nearly streams over the boundary line. He was greatly relieved when he found that his potato patch was entirely in "God's Country." I verily



believe he would have uprooted such part as might have flourished upon Canadian soil.

Among Americans there has, very naturally, been considerable dissatisfaction with the location of the boundary line, which has cut off the larger and richer portion of the Forty-Mile district mines. This would have been more loudly expressed were it not for the fact that it was established by William Ogilvie, a man honored by everyone who is fortunate enough to know him, and in Alaska and Klondike that includes nearly everybody in the country. He is a man of absolute and unquestioned integrity, only a fool would doubt that. So sensitive is he upon this point that he leaves the Yukon without a single mine or the smallest interest in one, although he might honestly be a multi-millionaire. No miner but would gladly have given him the first "pointer for a rush," for every one that has occurred during the years he has been in the country. But Mr. Ogilvie has a Roman idea of honor. He was there to survey an international boundary, no one should be able to say that any personal considerations affected his findings. The miners have striven time and again to force gifts of parts of rich mines upon him. He has invariably declined. They have even tried to "salt" pans of gravel for his washing, when a number have been invited to pan for gold. Even then he has insisted upon choosing his pan, for the custom is to give the gold to those invited to wash it. In this day and generation such a high sense of honor is enough in itself to render a man exceptional. Besides this, Mr. Ogilvie is charming company, keen, witty, a royal story-teller and a good mimic. He is full of fun and utterly unaffected, though a scientific man of no mean attainments. He never drinks and his life compels the



respect of all men, yet he is thoroughly liked, as well as respected, by the rough miners with whom he is associated. No man is more ready to do one a favor. He has surveyed whole creeks, refusing a cent—perhaps a pinch of dust would be more appropriate in speaking of a country where cents are less common than fortunes. He would take only his actual expenses from the miners. Mr. Ogilvie's merry eyes, successful dialect, and manner of enjoying it all, are irresistible as he tells his stories. He enjoys a joke even upon himself and told me with appreciation of his difficulty in keeping an Indian guide whom he had allowed to look through his telescope. The native stoutly asserted that a man who could see stars in the daytime didn't need him to show the source of a river.

Mr. Ogilvie is apt in description of people. In talking to me about one man he said, "He has but one idea and can't see Mount St. Elias in the way when he's thinking it."

I learned from Mr. Ogilvie the length of a "pipe." It is from five to seven miles. Three and a half "pipes" make a "spell." These are common terms along the Mackenzie and wherever the Hudson Bay Company has been. Among the *voyageurs* smoking is as universal as eating and the recognized places for smoking, or lengths between puffs, are pipes. In fact, upon the rivers where travel was common the call to stop rowing came from the steersman as "*Illume!*" meaning to light pipes. It is curious, the information gained among different peoples from such terms. Among the Burmese the word for mile means "to sit," the distance he considers it necessary to travel before resting. Speaking of pipes, in Alaska the fibula of the crane is often used for a pipe stem.

Mr. Ogilvie has an invaluable collection of photo-



graphs, about 4,000, which he has taken throughout the Yukon country. Scores he has enlarged. Many of these suggest delightful anecdotes. It is a pity that he does not steal time from his busy life to write these down. Even his official reports are interesting. I asked him if he had ever discovered any suggestive fossils or remains of any kind. Mr. Ogilvie replied that he had found a piece of moosehead deep in drift, and in pay-streak, eighteen feet below the surface on El Dorado, two buffalo horns, worn on one side from scooping, and near by the skull of an elk. It is notable that with his wide experience among the miners of that entire region, Mr. Ogilvie saw but two gold crystals, and those but partially crystallized.

"Squaw Rock" is twenty-four miles beyond the boundary. At Fort Cudahy, 1,596 miles from St. Michael—St. Michael for Alaska is like that other post—

"Each man's chimney is his golden milestone,  
The spot from which he reckons every distance."

At Cudahy, I started to say, the climax of the beautiful scenery of the Yukon is reached. The now abandoned barracks of Fort Constantine nestle down amid the loveliness, and the dark mountains are silent and stern below the rose-colored, snow-patched, cloud-mountains above them. Until last winter, Fort Constantine was headquarters for the Canadian mounted police who have now removed to their barracks near Dawson. As our boat approached, its American colors dipped thrice to the Union Jack upon the flagstaff ashore, and the salute was returned. As we came up, the inspector of mounted police came toward the boat. Tan boots laced to the knees, yellow stripes down the tight trousers, a Scotch cap set at a wondrous angle upon the head—it must have been kept on by suction, the



cap I mean—and, you will never believe it, a monocle! the only one, let us hope, in the wild and woolly West. The mounted police under rule of Captain Constantine have done most effective work, even with canoes for mounts. Next summer they will have a small steamer which will render their protection even more valuable. Strange that our government makes no provision for its citizens. It was at Cudahy we saw the moon again, for weeks it had not been dark enough to perceive it, or any stars. One of the ladies stationed at the fort said she had seen several moons at once there of an Arctic night, seven upon one occasion. What would the premonitions of Cæsar have been over seven? He would probably have heeded Calphurnia. Three, I think, was the limit then. Speaking of Cæsar reminds me of a miner I met who had succeeded in buying a disreputable and cheap volume of Shakespeare for five dollars. He said that he was “simply hungry” for Shakespeare and had been “reduced to reading the Bible.”

The trading post Cudahy and Fort Constantine are on one side of Forty-Mile creek, where it empties into the Yukon; Forty Mile is on the other, about two miles away. It is “forty miles” from the old and now abandoned Fort Reliance near Dawson. The creek is a river 250 miles long, with a delta of seventy miles upon which anything in the way of vegetables grows like mushrooms.

The town of Forty-Mile was also the liveliest of mining towns, its day being before Circle City boomed. It is said “Bob” Ainsley received \$20,000 for a lot there which could now probably be bought for an ounce. Fortunes have been made here as at Dawson, and by men who had no better reason for coming than a young Chicagoan I met. His father was a rich man



who had made his own money and was incessantly telling his son how hard he had worked when the son's age. Then the young man let a careless remark fall about having a notion to try his luck on the Yukon, so a paper mentioned that he was going to Alaska. That settled it, he went. Another man, a contractor in Charlestown, W. Va., became "Klondiked." He suddenly decided to go and started within an hour, arriving just twenty minutes before the ship sailed. A lady told me of a trip she took partly up Mount Tacoma. On the way she and her husband stopped for refreshment at the little home of a German. He seemed always to have been there and they spoke between themselves of his contentedly dying there, rather envying his fixity of life. This was in the afternoon. At 8 o'clock in the evening some men dropped in to the German's cabin and began talking Klondike. At 11 o'clock of the same night he started down the mountain with them on his way to Alaska! Why this gold fever affects men physically, the pulse quickens—do you know the worst form of yellow fever is gold fever? It is insidious, contagious, epidemic, only to be allayed homeopathically. Is it not suggestive that gold is found in such hard places, and that for love of it many people lose honor so that a saying like this is believed by the majority—"There is no place invincible wherein an ass loaded with gold may not enter."

On a little island close to Forty Mile is the home of a strange and learned man, Bishop Bompas of the English church. He is to Northwest Territory what Hinman was to the Sioux. The bishop speaks all Indian languages throughout the country even to the Mackenzie River, and "will only talk to a white till a Siwash happens along." A man of deep and varied learning, he has affiliated himself with the filthy



Indians to a degree astonishing. Bishop Bompas, by the way, is a son of "Sergeant Buzfuz," of Pickwick Paper fame. He came to Northwest Territory in 1842. In 1878, he and his wife went to British Columbia on dog sleds and snowshoes to settle some church matters, a long and perilous journey. Offered passage to London many times he refused it because he couldn't leave his Indians and was afraid of being drawn away from the work to which he had consecrated himself. For twenty-five years he and his wife ate absolutely nothing but fish. They were allowed fifty pounds of flour and some tea once a year, and it was six months on the way by dog sled. They used flour only on anniversaries and high holidays. When visiting the missions Bishop and Mrs. Bompas were obliged to go separately as there was not extra food enough for two. Both have known what it is to be genuinely hungry and cold. It is probably these things that make the old man so peculiar about household affairs now that need for worry has passed. He always carries the key of the pantry and deals out stores as if every ounce were next to the last.

Bishop Bompas is one of the few who love learning for its own sake. With him it is no love of show, of preferment, of outstripping another, of fame. He is said to be one of the finest Oriental scholars in the world, and to know enough dead languages to be able to talk with almost any shade in Hades in his own tongue. Bishop Bompas is author of a number of books, one of which, "Bible Sights in Arctic Lands," should be especially interesting at this time when everyone is looking from Yukon to Cuba and from Cuba to Yukon, as from circle to circle in a two-ringed circus.



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE END OF THE RAINBOW, AND SUNDRY POTS OF GOLD

Once upon a time, when we were children—I mean little children, for really grown-up men and women are very rare—we used to lay our tired little heads upon our pillows and straightway journey to the Land of Nod. In that country, the be-eautifulest and wonderfulest things were quite common. The bushes which bordered the wayside hung with great bunches of butter-scotch, the rocks were of “peppermints,” and the streams of molasses! Oh, it was such a beguiling country, but as we strove to eat and pocket these delights at the same time, we heard a faraway voice which drew nearer till we waked to hear, “Come, children, get up and shovel away the snow.” And it was only a dream. There was nothing whatever in our small clenched hands, and the fair Land of Nod had faded into the everyday world where we had to run errands, or chop wood, or dig in the garden or water the grass for a stingy cent.

But to most of us dreams come no more, and if they do, we dimly know that we dream, and are not deluded by the gifts sleep brings. Too often have we wakened to find our tired hands empty. The boundaries of the Land of Nod have been disputed by no nation, and the mariner drifts without a chart on Slumber Sea. But to many thousands Klondike is the grown-up Land of Nod. They half expect nuggets to grow like butter-scotch on bushes, to lie atop the ground like peppermint rocks, to float in creeks like golden syrup. They seem to think that gold dust swirls about in the streets of Dawson if but a summer



breeze arises. These will waken to a hoarse voice calling, "Come, men, time to shovel." And it won't be home, dear old home, but Alaska, and they must trudge over the mountains, chop wood, dig and sluice the gold which provides few comforts and no luxuries.

To hear men talk of Dawson and yearn to reach it, you would think it the gateway of heaven. Did men strive to enter the latter with a tithe the zeal and persistence, this earth would be a paradise. The Millennium would not even tarry to enter with the new century. But the fact is, I don't know a place that is further from the Kingdom than Dawson, the metropolis of Klondike, chief city in the province of Gold, the capital of the dominion of Greed.

The scenery all about Dawson is very beautiful. Mountains tower on both sides of the swift-flowing Yukon, and the river winds among them restlessly. The town straggles along the bank but a few feet above the water, 1,650 miles from St. Michael, while two miles further up, the Klondike River empties its clear green into the dull gray of the Yukon. All these estimates of distances were furnished me by Captain John C. Barr, and are the first accurate ones published. Mr. Ogilvie, D. L. S., also received and accepted the estimates from him. Captain Barr, who was one of the owners of a large steamboat company on the upper Missouri in early days, and captain of one of the boats, estimated 816 miles of that river fifteen years before it was surveyed, when it was found to be within four miles of the measured distance.

When these greatest of placer mines were discovered, miners rushed by scores from Circle City and its mines. In four weeks, Dawson's population increased from 40 to 2,200, and last year had become 3,500. It was named after the able head of the geological survey of



Canada, whose father is professor at McGill College, and a well-known author. When fabulous stories of the wealth of the new region reached the old miners, they laughed at the tenderfeet and cracked many a joke at their expense. "Yes," said one of them, ruefully, "I might have been a multi-millionaire if I hadn't been so wise in my own conceit. I simply would not be coaxed into rushing off with the other 'fools.' The tenderfeet benefited by being credulous." Well, that's the way of it the world over.

"Experience is a dumb, dead thing;  
The victory's in believing."

In these days of scientific marvels, one wonder treading on another's heels, to be incredulous is to brand oneself as ignorant.

Those who rushed off to Dawson would not cumber themselves with supplies for fear of being too late, so that everything was scarce and high. Gumboots cost \$40 a pair; water was \$1 a bucket, because no one had time to melt the ice.

Early last summer, 1897, Dawson was a town of tents placed so close that it resembled the bivouac of an army. As the ice thawed the peat reeked, and the mud, inky, black and sticky seemed bottomless. A narrow walk was laid along the main "street," and the inhabitants leaped, elsewhere, from one clod to another like gazelles from rock to rock. Everybody dumped refuse anywhere; there was no drainage. The result was inevitable, epidemic typhoid, with death as its all but certain end. There were physicians, but no nurses, no hospitals, and few medicines, while the sufferers could not escape from the causes of the disease. Dawson physicians charge "according to a man's pile." One received \$50 a visit from a miner in town, and \$250 a visit to the mines up Klondike.



The summer sun dried out the worst of the bog, but the log huts, which took the place of tents, were built directly upon it, so that floors were apt to be cold and damp. Yet one-room cabins are eagerly bought at \$500, or rented for \$50 a month; two-room ones, \$100, and demand exceeding the supply. Carpenters were paid \$20 a day. Later in the summer, Dawson was a substantial log-cabin town, with large company stores and warehouses there. At one of these stores, I was told that for some time sales had averaged \$10,000 a day, and that \$1,000,000 worth of goods could be quickly disposed of. No one ever asks the price of anything, the only question is whether it is to be had. One rich miner of generous proportions told me that he had but one coat in twelve years. Every time he had heard that suits had been brought in he would hurry down to see if he could squeeze into one, but he was on his way to 'Frisco in a blue flannel shirt. I saw a woman in Dawson wearing a red waist with large white porcelain buttons, and a child who was constantly tripping over the ends of his own shoes, which were several sizes too large for his little feet. Not long before, the lamp wicks had given out. This was little short of a calamity, but the ingenuity of a woman devised a substitute. She cut some old felt hats into strips, and, though the result was not dazzling, it was illuminating. Dawson is overrun with depraved women, most of whom came in over the pass, and so were unable to bring much finery. These readily seize upon anything at any price. Last summer some taffeta silk was taken there, and became watered silk so that the colors "ran." It was unrolled from the bolts and hung up to dry, then sold as fast as it could be measured, at ten dollars a yard. The clerk was bewailing his stupidity in not asking fifteen.







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The main street of Dawson follows along the bank. Most of the business places are, of course, saloons. There may be a dearth of "grub," but whisky's never failed them yet. I'm not a connoisseur in liquors, but I here assert that Dawson whisky would eat a hole through a miser's safe. It is no fairy tale that one saloonist cleared \$60,000 in sixty days, and went out of the country to spend the profits. At every bar, one man spends his entire time weighing gold, and it is strange how much he spills—probably the "dust" gets into his eyes, making him as blind as Justice at her scales. And we all know that the worst form of blindness is caused by gold, whose shine is worse than the dazzle of snow, bringing madness to the victim. Here is the largest of the saloons, bare, sordid, with no mirrors to reflect the rough figures of the miners, or tawdry attire of the dance women, no polished bar of carved woods, no array of prismatic decanters, no ceiling of white and gold—the gold's on the floor, and white there is none. The sawdust which covers the floor is burned for the gold which sifts into it. It is vice unadorned, unveiled, repellant. Yet, in this place, you will find men from homes clean and lovely, in both senses. The few kerosene lamps, dim and smoking, blink about the room, and wheezy music invites to the dance. Here comes a man you might once have known, but with his untrimmed beard and rough clothes, hat on head and pipe in mouth, you would not recognize him as he grasps the vilest of the vile women present for the mazy dance. Indeed, it is a maze to them, for the liquor which has brightened their eyes has had no such effect upon their wits, but has tangled their feet, and they reel dizzily about. Every waltz costs a dollar, and is short, so that as many as possible may be crowded in before the



dancers shall be too drunk to essay further participation. After each number, the miners conduct their "ladies,"—O long-suffering word!—to the bar for more of the fiery liquor, at fifty cents a glass. As the night wears on, the whisky openly mocks its victims, amusing itself with their varying antics. One jolly giant bursts into ribald song, and others join him; a dissolute with hair bleached to a canary color spies a quiet fellow who is leaning against a wall watching the scene, and obtaining a handful of salt sprinkles him liberally with it, asserting, with hiccoughs, that "he is too fresh." A derisive howl greets her drunken wit. A slip of a boy becomes quarrelsome, and insists upon "fighting the crowd." He is with difficulty quieted. It is singular that there is so little fighting and bloodshed in Dawson. The presence of the Canadian mounted police is salutary, yet even at Circle City, where there were none, and Kipling might well say,

"There runs no law of God nor man to the north of 53," there was very little lawlessness. When a man is liable to be deported in the dead of a winter-long night, in a country where, literally, "a crow flying would have to carry his provisions with him," he is more or less cautious, even in his cups. Now everything is changed, but before this rush to Alaska property was entirely safe. No one locked up anything.

Mingling with the whites are many squaws, who are regularly employed at these infamous dance houses, and who support more infamous white men who do nothing but laze about. Some of these "squaw men" are said to be married to decent women in the States. When I was in Alaska, there were but two negroes. When they first entered the country, the Indians, observing that he had not Indian features, called him the equivalent of "White-man-who-never-washes-his-



face." Referring again to squaws, it is deplored by the miners that there are not enough to go 'round. They are more docile than the depraved white women, and will work for their lords and masters. The titles Mr. and Miss are largely superfluous in Alaska. A man does not even always bear the name he "wore down below." Many a man is called something the miners think appropriate, and he can do nothing but submit. "Side-wheeler," for instance, has a long and a short leg. Gumboot Annie, Ben Butler, Mukluk Lizzie, Cannibal Ike, Billy the Horse, Peter Pig, Outlaw Bill, Hootchino Albert, Happy Jack, Calamity Bill, etc., have, so far as Dawson is concerned, no other names.

Gambling goes on from early morn to dewy eve, and from night till morning. Signs upon the saloon walls announce faro \$25 and \$50, and caution you not to overplay your sack. A miner will play until tired, and then call out to an acquaintance, "I say, Bill, come over and play my checks awhile, won't you?" Then he will go out for an hour and resume the game. One fellow came in drunk about six o'clock in the morning, and speedily lost what he had. He left the saloon, and returned with \$6,000 in dust, which he announced he would play if he lost every ounce of it, and he would sit there until he won it back if he rotted in his seat, as he recklessly put it. He did lose it all, but at past seven at night rose exhausted from the table with it, and \$115 to his credit.

"Gold, gold, gold, gold!

Good or bad a thousand-fold!

How widely its agencies vary,—

To save, to ruin, to curse, to bless,

As even the minted coins express,

Now stamped with the image of good Queen Bess

And now of a "Bloody Mary."



Next to saloons, restaurants pay best in Dawson. I talked with a woman who cleared \$4,000 in six weeks in hers. This money she had invested in mines, which her husband and son worked. They went in penniless, and were coming out rich. A young fellow cleared \$450 in three days in another restaurant. Cafés in Dawson demand no experience, only hard work. An ordinary meal costs \$1.50. This means coffee, bread and beans or bacon, no etceteras. If you want extras like eggs, if they are to be had at all, you may pay \$1.80 for breakfast for one, as a miner I know did. He only remarked it was worth \$25. The miner furnishes his own sauce, hunger sauce, and does no grumbling, either at viands or service. "It is a great country, this Yukon, to take the kick out of a man," said a miner to me; "a fellow gets to be thankful to be allowed simply to live." When milk gives out, or sugar, or both, the coffee is served plain. In Alaska, if you ask for bread you are apt to receive a stone, though I must say that aboard the *Healy* the cook made the most delicious bread, rolls and biscuits that I ever tasted, fit for Delmonico's. Water is not served from "our own artesian well," but from the Yukon. It is warm and muddy, but handy. At the lower end of the town is a spring of pure water, icy cold, but it is too far to be carried by these hurried gold seekers. A man in Dawson wanted to pipe it down, but as the near-sighted government would afford him no protection, the man abandoned the project. Pure water would prevent much of the sickness in Dawson. In summer, ice costs a dollar a pound there, although the bluff about half a mile down the river is a glacier. But no one has time to bring ice from Nature's refrigerator. For the same reason, although the Yukon is alive with salmon, it is cheap when twenty cents a pound. A miner paid \$50



for the first one caught last year. Fresh meat is announced by signs outside the restaurants, and induces a rush, though moose are plentiful not far away in the mountains. I stopped at the butcher's. The counter was across the open end of a tent, like a stall in a market. Upon it were the meat and scales, and the gold scales, some cuts of moose and a bundle of roughly whittled wooden skewers about six inches long. A man had bought some moose steak, and was walking off with it thrust on a skewer, for there is no wrapping paper. I asked him how much it was. He looked rather surprised, and said he didn't know. The butcher heard, though, and replied, "only seventy-five cents a pound." When I commented upon the method of delivery, the miner said it was all right for meat, but when he had attempted to carry home a dozen doughnuts, for which he paid a dollar, strung on a willow cutting, he had arrived at his cabin with only half. "You see," he said, good-naturedly, "they smelled good, and everybody that passed helped himself. I ought to have bought more."

The laundries do a thriving business. When I was there, they charged four bits, fifty cents, for any article, no matter how small, and considerable gold is realized from the water, too. The principal laundry was half of a large scow, covered with a tent. Quite a number of boats built to float down from the lakes are thus utilized at Dawson. One family lives in the stern end, while the bow half serves as a shed. Another queer house was of tenting nailed to wooden uprights. In another tent, a former Seattle dentist is doing business. The climate is very hard upon teeth. He charges from \$15 to \$30 for gold fillings, and, of course, has to import all the leaf. Bringing gold to Dawson is like coal to Newcastle, surely. The dentist charges



\$50 for a set of teeth mounted with rubber. He can not, of course, administer gas, but cocaine has robbed his chair, which occupies most of the little shack, by the way, of its horrors. There was a second dentist, but he exhausted his materials, and had to go out for more. That was the case, too, with the only photographer Dawson boasted. One day, when I was walking along with my kodak, at least a dozen people asked me to take photographs, or, if I had any to sell. One of these was the saloonist, who had the largest nugget found in Alaska up to that time. It weighed \$583.25, and was wedge-shaped, about the size of my hand. Although gold is so common in Alaska, no really large nuggets have been found. The largest one ever discovered was picked up in Australia, in 1852. It weighed 223 pounds. In California, three enormous nuggets, weighing 118, 149, and 151 pounds, have been found at different times. Speaking of nuggets reminds me of the jeweler's at Dawson. I leaped from log to log in the morass back of the main street to reach his store. His name, I remember, was appropriate, Pond. He must be growing rich fast, judging by the tremendous prices he asks for his work, which is mostly chains, rings, etc., made of nuggets. He showed me a ring which much resembled a small napkin ring, but which was to adorn the enormous hand of a Klondike miner. He had a really beautiful loose bracelet of nuggets, one of which had an emerald set in a natural hole. In Dawson, I saw two very curious nuggets. One was found with a small garnet set very neatly in its edge by Dame Nature herself. The other nugget was about an inch and a half long, and was almost a perfect cross with a figure which suggested that upon the crucifix.

The only furniture factory in Dawson was a booth.



it contained one fir bedstead half completed, and a faro table, which was being stained to mahogany.

There are plenty of dressmakers already in Dawson. The usual price for making a gown is \$30, which is very reasonable indeed, considering the cost of everything else. In fact, Dawson lacked only a church and a school when I was there. Both, I hear, are now supplied, also a hospital. Real estate is very high. The townsite is now held by Joseph Ladue, but there seems to be little doubt that it should belong to Fritz Kloke, who, before the Klondike excitement, had a fishery and garden where Dawson now stands. Real estate is high. A lot 50x100 feet was leased for ninety-nine years for \$2,000. Soon after half of it was re-leased for \$2,500, and two months later \$7,500 was refused for the other half. A saloonist bought a log building on a lot for \$12,000, which he paid for with three weeks' profits.

There is absolutely no decent amusement to be had in Dawson, nothing but drinking, gambling and carousing. I don't know where a Y. M. C. A. could be organized with greater results. If a warm room could be had where men might find congenial and decent company, baths, books, papers, etc., it would be a genuine godsend.

Two miles above Dawson the Klondike River empties into the Yukon. Fourteen miles up the Klondike are the greatest placer mines the world has ever seen, bordering creeks that empty into it, Bonanza, El Dorado, Hunker, Skookum, and others. The trail from Dawson is simply dreadful, and the strongest men can walk but a short distance upon it—or rather, through it. Every two or three miles there are road houses which afford rest and food. God seems to have placed the mark of His disapproval upon the world's



mad struggle for gold. It is always hidden in such difficult places, and men pay such awful prices for it. 'Tis like paying five dollars and a half for a five dollar gold piece. Deaths from exhaustion are quite frequent upon these trails. The day before I reached Dawson, an Iclander, his heavy pack upon his shoulders, sank upon the cruel path to rise no more. There he lay, his blue eyes staring undazzled at the sun, for to him the brightness of that other dawn had made our light but darkness. His stiffened shoulders heeded not that the pack lay upon them, for the burden of life had fallen from them for aye. Like a horse in harness, he fell. Far from the feeble old mother for whom he had so longed, the miner had at last made his homestake. "He was always homesick," said one of the rough men who found him, and he said it tenderly. That dear old saying came into my mind, "Blessed are the homesick, for they shall come at last to their Father's house."

It was in the summer of 1896 that McCormick overheard his squaw talking to her brother about gold on a little creek emptying into Klondike River. McCormick began prospecting on El Dorado, and September 15 came in with news of almost incredible richness. There was a general rush to the region, and by December it was found to be wonderful. No. 31 El Dorado sold for \$100 in September of '96, in April for \$31,000, and it is not for sale now if you would proffer that added to \$100,000. It is said that from "Discovery" to No. 37 on El Dorado every mine is worth at least \$100,000. On No. 9 there is a streak from three to four inches thick just above bedrock of almost pure gold. It appears to have, at one time, flowed through there a veritable rivulet of molten gold. Any time the owner wishes a thousand dollars, he has only to



sluice a very little earth for it. On another claim, two men in six hours shoveled one hundred pounds of gold! This gold is bought at Dawson for \$17 an ounce, though when it is to be sent out in drafts but \$15.60 is allowed, because the average of Klondike gold assays that. From two holes in another claim on this creek, four men washed out \$61,000 in one month, and \$1,500 was washed from two pans. These are not yarns, but sober facts. Did I not say Klondike is the grown-up Land of Nod? These miners are those who have "dreamed true." Take Alex McDonald as an example. He is a tall, dark, brawny Nova Scotian, who went into Alaska about three years ago without a dollar. He is now a multi-millionaire. He is the owner of the fabulous No. 30 El Dorado, and fifteen or sixteen other mines in Klondike. No one else has so many, and he is constantly buying more. At the present rate, he will be the richest man in the world in a few years, and he has wronged no one in gaining his vast fortune. McDonald is a quiet, temperate, manly man, and it is pleasant to see his success when you remember what abominable taste Dame Fortune usually shows in her favorites. Now, there's "Swift-Water Bill." Spending money like water doesn't express it, the current must be swift. He's the man who bought up every egg of the first invoice last spring for \$900 to spite a woman and prevent her having some for breakfast.

It is a curious fact that on Bonanza Creek gold has been found two and a half feet below bedrock. Bonanza gold will not break, but El Dorado gold will. From mine No. 26, where they took out ninety pounds of gold in one day, I have a key-shaped nugget of "wire gold," which I have bent double and straightened. When I came home from Alaska, I was prepared



to say that the richness of the placers could hardly be overestimated, but when I read in a paper that some man had seen five five-gallon cans full of gold dust, the gleanings of two men in one winter, I abandoned the idea. That amount of gold would be worth \$3,125,000, and would weigh six tons! And there isn't a derrick nor a jackscrew in all Alaska!

Yet No. 13 sold for \$45,000. From April 15 to June 1, four men took out \$42,628 from a strip 25x70 feet. The owner had sunk two holes, and found nothing to speak of. On El Dorado, the pay streak is 70 feet wide!

No wonder that men who toil early and late for the few dollars which so scantily keep their families, hearing these true tales, are almost willing to pawn their souls for money enough to try their luck.

"Judges and senates have been bought for gold"—they sneer,  
But they forget "Esteem and love were never to be sold."

I am just old-fashioned enough to believe that, though money is by no means to be despised, the loveless millionaire is poorer than love's millionaire, who, with wife and child beside him, warm in body and heart, sits by his own fireside, watching the flames dance and change color. Their hues are not so varied as those of the mysterious arch, but at least they give light and heat, while he might never, never find those fabled pots of gold at

THE RAINBOW'S END: ALASKA.

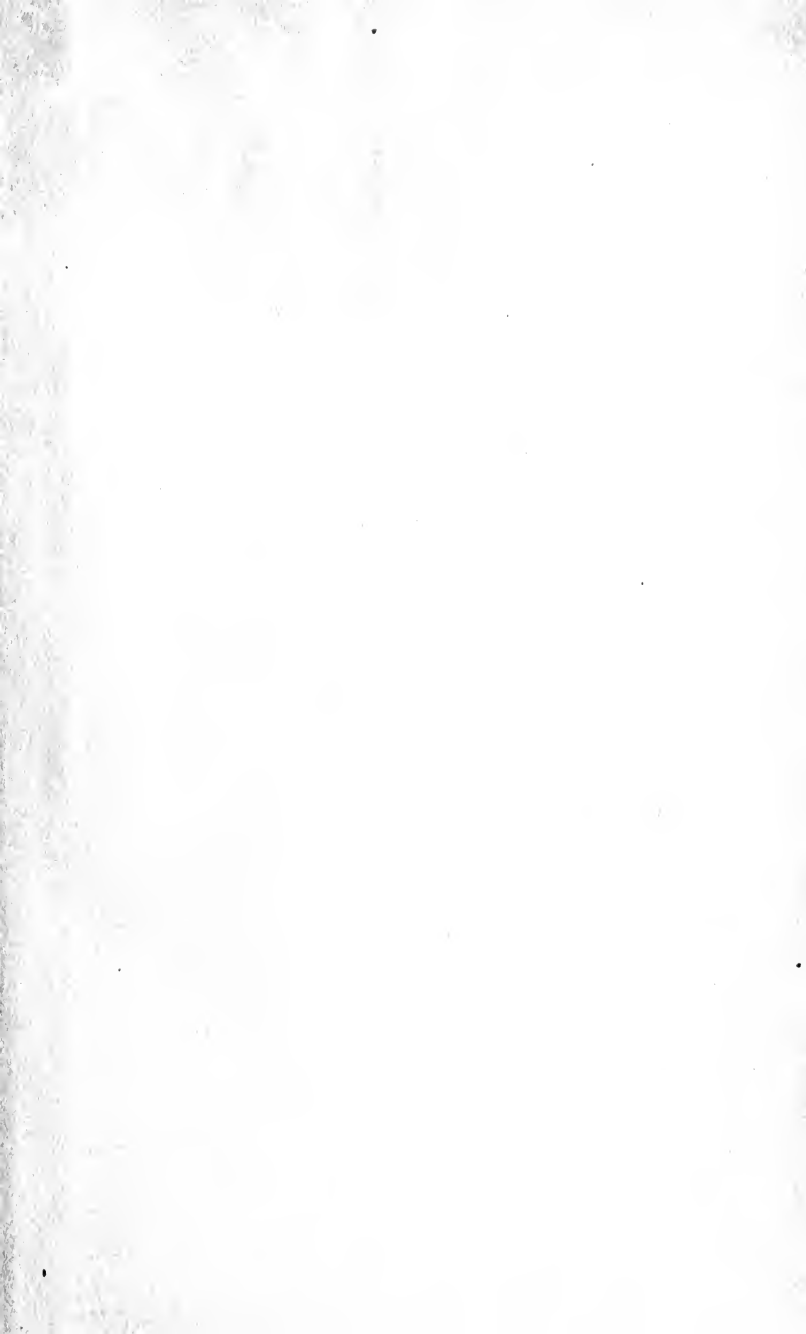


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